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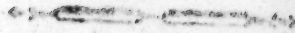


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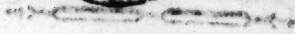
SERIOUS EXPOSTULATION, &c.



TWO SHILLINGS.



SERIOUS EXAMINATION, &c.



TWO SHILLINGS

A
SERIOUS EXPOSTULATION

WITH THE

Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON,

UPON HIS

Theological Errors concerning Miracles,
AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

*It is charity to cry out against the wolf, when he is among the sheep:
yea, wherever he is.—See St. Francis of Sales's Introduction to a De-
vout Life, Part 3. c. 29.*

BY THE

Rev. John Milner, F. S. A.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. P. COGLAN, No. 37. DUKE-STREET,
GROSVENOR-SQUARE,

M DCC XCVII.



NOTATION

SERIOUS

Rev. JOSEPH PERKINSON

UPON HIS

Episcopal Career concerning

AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

It is hereby notified that the only copies of this work are to be had of the Rev. Joseph Perkinson, at his residence, No. 15, St. James's Place, London, W.

BY THE

Rev. John Milner, B. D.

LONDON

Printed by J. B. COGHAN, No. 27, Dursley Street, Gloucester.

M DCC XCVII

A

SERIOUS EXPOSTULATION, &c.

REV. SIR,

HAVING finished your late pamphlet upon miracles, very much, [as it appears, to your own satisfaction; in the conclusion you hurl defiance at your literary antagonists, in the following triumphant exclamation: “ I look now for a man, who will be “ hardy enough to maintain, that the Deity “ can patronise superstition*.”—The gauntlet, which you throw down, I, Sir, take up; not as the champion of the reported prodigies, upon which, though called upon

* *An Examination of Events termed miraculous, as reported in Letters from Italy.* p. 27. By the Rev. Joseph Berington.

B

from

from a respectable quarter*, I will not, for good reasons, give a public opinion, in the present stage of the business; but as a defender of the cause of the church and of the common interests of christianity; against both of which you have aimed mortal blows, by the mode of your attack upon the miraculous events in question, as well as by your theological productions in general. For when alas! was Mr. Berington known to wield the pen without provoking the sighs of the friends of virtue and the true religion, and the plaudits of their enemies!

I feel no difficulty, Sir, in considering the irreligious sentiments contained in the first paragraph of your pamphlet † as your own, and as those which you are desirous of impressing upon the public mind; notwithstanding you put them into the mouth of your friend. In fact you were then writ-

‡ See The Review of Books in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for the month of October, 1796. p. 853. note.

† See *Examination*, p. 3. p. 4.

ing



ing for the public, as you expressly mention*. Of course, if you had disapproved of the sentiments in question, you would have been much less anxious to state them, than to bring forward your objections against them. You would never have presented what you considered a poison to the public, without furnishing them with an antidote against the effects of it. But what need of argument on a point so plain? You admit the general truths of your supposed friend's observations, and only hesitated to apply them to the Miraculous events reported from Italy, until you had read the pamphlet under that title, when, it seems, all your doubts were removed. Let us now see what are the "general truths" in question.

"Italy and of Italy the Papal states
 "are as yet the soil, in which such phæ-
 "nomena are permitted to vegetate†.

"Where

* Ibidem, p. 5.

† Exam. p. 3. The learned reader will not fail of being struck with the liberties, in point of grammar

" Where the preservation of power rests
 " so much on opinion, that opinion, when
 " a concurrence of causes seems to threat-
 " en its overthrow, must be strengthened,
 " or its decline will be rapid, and the pow-
 " er it supported will be involved in the
 " fall." What this power is which rests
 upon opinion, and is in danger of falling
 with the same, does not, at first sight,
 appear; but we gather, from the next
 sentence but one, that this is said of the
priesthood, which hitherto we have been
 taught to believe, rests upon the immove-
 able basis of the Divine Omnipotence and
 veracity. This interpretation of the text
 before us is elucidated by what follows:
 Let us pay attention to it: " The priest-
 " hood in these circumstances would na-
 " turally have recourse to the means most
 " congenial with their general habits; and,

no less than of theology, which Mr. Berington assumes.
 The author of this, however, has not leisure to attend
 to such matters; otherwise it would be an easy task to
 prove that this gentleman's style is as faulty, as his sen-
 timents are.

" as

" as in the history of the progress of their
 " ministry through many ages, it is plain,
 " they have encouraged a belief in prodigies,
 " whereby heaven is understood to
 " announce its acceptance of their offices,
 " is it too severe, to suppose they would
 " again recur to the same means, should
 " occasions prove favorable; that is, should
 " the minds of the multitude become susceptible
 " of the strong impressions of enthusiasm." Thus is the most important
 of these " general truths" unfolded. The
 means congenial with the aggregate body
 of the priesthood (not with certain bad or
 political priests) are imposture and lying
 prodigies, built on the " enthusiasm of the
 " multitude, whenever the occasion has
 " proved favorable: the history of the
 " progress of their ministry through many
 " ages proves their having encouraged
 " this belief." And, for what purpose I
 pray you, Rev. Sir, have they encouraged
 this delusion? In order that " Heaven
 " may be understood to accept of their
 " offices." — So then the offices of the

priesthood, their preaching and their prayers, their sacraments and their sacrifice are barely *understood* to be acceptable to heaven, or, as you expressed it before, *rest upon opinion*: and, to gain this very opinion, it has been found necessary to recur to a system of the vilest hypocrisy and imposture that human nature is capable of! And, who is it, the reader will naturally ask, that is capable of holding this language in the face of a promiscuous multitude, of every denomination, already too much infected with irreligion and incredulity? Will he believe me when I tell him that it is a priest of the Catholic Church, one who has been educated, supported and engaged, by solemn vows, to perform, during life, the offices of his sacred function? No, the reader will reply, that is impossible: such a priest would many months ago, have sent his *Lettres de Pretrise*, or ordination papers, with an avowal of the sentiments before us to the French National Convention. Such a confession of the imposture of his order, from a foreign priest, would have insured him

him still higher honors than those conferred upon his confederate Dr. Geddes*. Like Thomas Paine or his friend Dr. Priestley, he would have been appointed, in his absence, deputy to some nick-named province, and would have established a posthumous claim to the apotheosis of the Pantheon; where no "niced mawmets"† of saints, would now disgust his "philosophic coolness" (those niches are now occupied by the murderers of their friends and sovereigns‡): where he would no longer have to "lament that superstitious "veneration is paid to a shepherdess, "named St. Genevieve;§" but where worship, still more divine, is offered up to the enshrined ashes of the pious Voltaire, the chaste Rousseau and the God Marat||.

You

* Dr. Geddes received the thanks of the National Assembly for his *Carmen Seculare* in honor of the French Revolution, addressed to them.

† *Reflexions to Hawkins* by Rev. Jos. Berington p. 74.

‡ Brutus, Pelletier, De St. Fargeau, &c.

§ *History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloise*, by the Rev. Mr. Berington, p. 19.

|| The author is informed that, in one of those
sacred

You next proceed, Sir, still however by the mouth of your supposed friend, to apply these "general truths" to the late prodigies "reported from Italy, which you conclude "either originated with the priests, who "were directed, by the ruling magistrates, "to mislead the people, or that, availing "themselves of the credulity of some weak "minds, the priests had favored the first "impressions of enthusiasm and set fire to "a train, of which the explosion, in the "contagious susceptibility of the human "mind could not be calculated." You now come forward, *in propria persona*, (af-

sacred duties of insurrection, which these philosophic worshippers of the Goddess of Reason have so often performed of late, the bloody God Marat, (the same who boldly proclaimed, at the beginning of the reign of his friend Roberspierre that 400,000 heads in France must fall under the guillotine) was undeified, His altar, at the Carousal, was demolished, his putrid remains were dragged out of the sacerd crypts of the church of St. Genvieve, (now the Pantheon) and the harbour which had given up its claim to God's grace (Havre de Grace) in honor of the new Deity, was ordered to renounce his protection and denomination as Havre de Marat.

ter an affected hesitation on the imperfect nature of the documents first received) to support this conclusion to the best of your abilities. Accordingly you intimate, but without any document at all, and merely because such suppositions are necessary for the support of your conclusion, that “ the
 “ Cardinal Bishop of Ancona, with the o-
 “ ther magistrates, by their agents and o-
 “ ther means, as other kings and ministers
 “ and priests had done before them, exert-
 “ ed their endeavours to keep alive the
 “ enthusiasm of the multitude*.” That
 they bribed three eminent painters, to at-
 test to the world, in a solemn juridical in-
 formation, a notorious falsehood†, and that
 the Pope himself “ from his palace fed the
 “ public enthusiasm,—like other politic ru-
 “ lers converting the sottishness of the mul-
 “ titude into a commodious engine of go-
 “ vernment,” and adopting the maxim of
 imposture: “ *Si populus vult decipi, decipia-*
 “ *tur*‡.” Yet you pretend to “ impute no

* p. 16.

† p. 18.

‡ p. 20, 21.

“ unworthy

“unworthy views to Pius VI.” and assert that “the severest moral casuistry will absolve him (in this supposed transaction) whilst political prudence will applaud him;” because, forsooth he mingled religion with his policy, and because the “enthusiastic belief that he encouraged tended to draw men to a reform of life and to the practice of religious duties.”

According to your casuistry then it is not unworthy even the Vicar on earth of the Eternal Truth, and the peculiar judge of miraculous effects, to propagate a belief in lying prodigies and to abet a forgery of the broad seal of heaven itself*. Remember,

Sir,

* I cannot refrain expressing my astonishment that Mr. Berington himself should not perceive the contradictions into which he gives. According to him: “It is unworthy of the great Author of Nature to perform these prodigies” see p. 5. but it is not unworthy of his Vicegerent on earth to propagate the belief of them! They tend to strengthen superstition and to alienate the mind from all just notions of religion and to deteriorate the moral character of the species.” p. 6. yet the severest casuistry,

Sir, that it is you who teach this doctrine. Had you discovered the same in any of our antiquated casuists, what a lecture would you not have read us, on *pious frauds and religious impostures*? In a word, you represent the whole business of these miracles (and in this opinion you are not singular, for you have the whole tribe of ill-informed and prejudiced news-writers and reviewers with you) as an artifice of the Papal government, to rouse the people against their dreaded invaders, the French Republicans†. But if this were so, permit me, Sir, to ask, why did not these consummate politicians, as you represent them, follow up their measure, when they were witnesses to

casuistry, will absolve Pius VI. in feeding the public enthusiasm in favor of their reality! Those who are desirous of seeing still more curious specimens of the *pro* and the *con*, upon the same subjects and by the same author, are referred to two contrasted columns at the end of Mr. Plowden's *Remarks on the Memoirs of Greg. Panzani*, which are given under the title of *Philosophic Consistency or Berington against Berington*.

† p. 12.

its unbounded success? Why did not they put arms into the hands of the enthusiastic myriads, and form the descendants of the Scipios and the Cæsars into those invincible legions, which had so often chased the Transalpine barbarians within their native bounds? But, was there a single sword drawn on the occasion, or so much as one breach repaired in the venerable walls? You know the contrary; and the best informed and most respectable of the letter-writers expressly assures you, that the “ people, who before, were only taken up “ with thoughts of the French, did not “ conclude it (the prodigy in question) to “ be a sign of their being to be delivered “ from them; but that the effects of it “ were, sincere repentance, the reconcilia- “ tion of enemies, immediate restitution, “ confession and other public signs of pe- “ nance*.” Both the Pope and his people well knew that every demonstration of

* Dr. J. C. Bonomi in the pamphlet of *Miraculous Events*. p. 20:

piety,

piety would irritate without disarming their earthly enemies, but their aim was to disarm the wrath of their heavenly Father, whose voice, calling them to repentance, they conceived themselves to hear.

Again, Sir, permit me to remind you, that I am not now defending the cause of the late miracles; that contest, if I were really anxious about it, whilst the church at large and our own pastors are silent concerning it, I could with safety entrust to the hands of your female adversary, who, to speak the truth, has proved herself more than your equal*. But observing the same irreligious principles, envenomed with the same caustic sarcasm, in your late pamphlet, which have distinguished your productions for several years past, and finding that, so far from granting a respite, you threaten the Church with fresh and more dangerous attacks, I have been induced to point out these principles, together with a few of

* See *A few Thoughts on the R. Jos. B. Exam. by a Catholic Lady*. — J. P. Coghlan.

your other theological errors, to yourself, that you may reconsider them to the public that it may be warned against them, and to our ecclesiastical superiors that they may be informed of their existence. With respect to the subject of the miracles, my chief labour has been to analyze what you have written on the same, and to bring the points at issue between us, into distinct and separate views: these are, 1st, the continuation of miracles in the catholic church; 2dly, the criteria or marks for judging of miracles; and 3dly, the evidence necessary for attesting their existence. From the examination of your doctrine on these several heads, it will appear that you have not only undermined the foundations of the catholic cause, but also those of our common christianity, for which you appear to be so solicitous*.

1st §.

Has there been in the church of God a succession of miracles, more or less in eve-

* Exam. p. 31.

ry age since that of Christ and his apostles? Or are we "to surrender this point," as you tell us "the great defenders of christianity have done long ago, and rest satisfied with what the Deity has done for *his own work* in the foundation of christianity *?"

When, Sir, I take in hand the history of God's people, as dictated by his own infallible voice, I can no where open a page of the same, but some divine interposition, some miraculous effect or other meets my eye. As I rapidly glance at its contents, I observe, in the first place, the Divinity keeping up a supernatural intercourse with our first parents and their descendants. By visible signs, or other means, out of the ordinary course of nature, he signifies his acceptance or disapprobation of their sacrifices and worship; he transports one of them out of the world, without passing through the gate of death, and warns another of the approaching destruction of man-

* *Ibid.*

kind, which he enables him and his family to escape. What are the histories of Abraham, Sara, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses but a series of the divine interposition either by prodigies or revelation? Nor are these diminished but rather increased, in number and importance, after God had made known his will in a more distinct and precise manner to his chosen people. All nature was subservient, not only to their instruction, but also to their preservation and comforts. *The sea saw and fled, Jordan was turned backward.* Ps. 113. The sky rained down bread upon them, the winds waisted them flesh meat, the parched sands of Arabia were drenched with water to quench their thirst: the sun itself stood still, in the midst of its course, to enable them to compleat the destruction of their enemies. It will be sufficient here to mention the names of a Sampson, a David, a Solomon, an Ezechias, an Elias, an Elizeus, an Onias, or indeed of any other distinguished servant of God, down to the miraculous birth of the precursor of our Lord,

Lord, in order to convince you that there was a succession, more or less of the divine interposition, either by prodigies or revelation, in the church of God of old down to the time of Christ himself, when, as we learn from the sacred text, a standing miracle, unconnected with his sacred mission, had long existed, namely that of the angel descending and giving a healing quality to the probatical pond in the city Jerusalem.*

With this view before my eyes of God's dealings with his people of old, is it natural for me to expect that the Almighty should withdraw his special favours from them, at the time when he comes to form a more perfect covenant and a closer alliance with them? Can I persuade myself that he has never interposed his power in behalf of his saints and martyrs in the new law, on similar occasions to those which called forth his miracles in favor of his ancient servants? Yet this, Sir, is your favorite system, which you endeavour to im-

* St. John c. 5.

press upon the minds of the children of the church, in your other writings, as well as in your late pamphlet. The zeal which you display against the late reported prodigies is easily accounted for : through their sides you endeavour to stab the credit of all miraculous operations, performed since the days of the apostles, and the motive of this opposition to them is obviously displayed: you are sensible that your projected reform of alledged superstition with respect to images, relicks, &c. can never take place, whilst Catholics are persuaded that God has sanctioned the opinions and practices in question by acknowledged miracles. But lest some of your friends should deny the fact of your having advanced as far as I have represented in your opposition to miracles, I will bring forward a few of your positions concerning them.

In a former work of yours, quoted below, amongst other passages of the same tendency, I find the following: " Ignorance, superstition, bigotry and enthusiasm most clearly attended the progress of
" miraculous

"miraculous operations, through that
 "series of years, when their appearance
 "was thought to be most frequent. . . .
 "they have ceased to happen since the
 "clouds of ignorance have dispersed, and
 "religion has been purified from the base
 "allay of human opinions *." I will not
 now comment upon this extraordinary text,
 however irreligious and erroneous it is in
 various respects, but proceed to others, ta-
 ken from your last production. "The
 "energy of miraculous powers," you tell
 us, "has long ceased to be a subject of po-
 "pular belief †." Hence you condemn
 the editors of a late work for attempting
 to revive that belief; which you would
 most certainly not have done, had you
 admitted the existence of these powers.
 Indeed you had in the preceding page ta-
 ken pains to represent this belief, as an *arti-
 fice of the priesthood*, in order to preserve
 their power. Again, you say, "I write

* *History of Abeillard and Heloise*, p. 185.

† *Exam.* p. 5.

" to check the attempts of men who are la-
 " bouring to impress on the minds of Eng-
 " lish Catholics a belief in prodigies *."

Still more, you lay it down as a maxim,
 that " Providence is not known to inter-
 " pose miraculously, where, as *amongst Chri-*
 " *stians*, all the ordinary means have been
 " provided for instruction, exhortation and
 " the application of other spiritual helps †."

Hence it obviously follows that no mira-
 cles are now, or ever have been wrought
 at least *amongst Christians*, because they have
 the ordinary helps. You continue: " We
 " have had men amongst us and still have
 " them, who fancy that the integrity, if not
 " the existence of their religion is connec-
 " ted with the perpetuity of miracles
 " Fortunately the defenders of the great
 " cause of our common christianity ‡ have
 " long

* *Ibid.* p. 30.

† *Ibid.* p. 23.

‡ These are the late paradoxical Dr. Middleton, in his *Free Inquiry*, and his disciples who invented this system as one necessary for the cause of protestancy, in opposition to the true church. The same author, published a
treatise,

“long ago surrendered that point . . .
 “With what the Deity has done, *for his*
 “*own work* * in the foundation of christia-
 “nity let us be satisfied †.” I think, Sir,
 I need add no more to prove that you have
 adopted, to its full extent, that system of
 irreligion and downright scepticism, against
 which sober protestant divines, notwith-
 standing its obvious conveniency, so decid-
 edly declared, at its first appearance. Ac-
 cording to your doctrine, we are to admit
 the miracles of Christ and his apostles, as
 necessary for the foundation of christianity,
 the rest are, what you term them, “the re-
 “sources of human contrivance †.”

But, Sir, if the matter be as you repre-
 sent it, every father of the church, from the
 first of them to the last, and every ecclesi-

triatise, to prove a parallel between the religion of pagan
 and of christian Rome.

* This is an inuendo that all miracles reported in
 favor of images, relicks, holy water, &c. are what they
 are afterwards termed “resources of human contrivance,”
 in favor of the *works of men*.

† *Ibid.* p. 31.

† *Ibid.*

astical

astical historian and writer, down to the days of Dr. Middleton, has laboured to propagate a series of notorious falsehoods, during eighteen hundred years: one consequence of which persuasion must be a general scepticism with respect to all past events. The imposture must have been begun by the very disciples of the apostles, such as an Ignatius and an Iræneus, to whom succeeded a Tertullian, an Origen, a Justin and a Cyprian, who appeal to the miracles that frequently took place in their respective times, and often in their own sight amongst the faithful, some times in proof of the general cause of christianity against infidels, some times as an argument in favor of the true church against heretics. Why need I mention the miracles ascribed to succeeding saints, many of which are recorded by other saints, not less renowned for their sanctity throughout the church; as those of a St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, related by St. Basil the Great, or of a St. Antony written by the illustrious St. Athanasius? Amongst the historians of miraculous

lous events, in primitive times, I cannot pass over the name of the holy and enlightened bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine, who almost fills a whole book * with the relation of miracles, performed in his own time and many of them in his own diocese, by means of the relicks of St. Stephen, amongst which miracles was the raising to life of no less than six dead bodies.

With christianity, you well know, passed into our island of saints the miraculous powers no less than the use of images, the effect of which in our apostle St. Augustine was so frequent that St. Gregory the Great thought it necessary to caution him against the vanity that might rise in his bosom, in consequence of the same. Has then our venerable Bede, and every one of our other original historians imposed upon us, in what they have related concerning the succession of miracles in an Augustine, a Birinus, a Cuthbert, an Oswald, an Edward, an Anselm and an Edmund, many of whom de-

* Lib. 22. de Civit. Dei.

clare themselves to have been witnesses of the facts they relate? Or have all the works of our saints and ecclesiastical writers, together with those of many pagan authors, as, for example of an Ammianus Marcellinus * been interpolated, in order to propagate a belief in miracles long before it was suspected that such unblushing sceptics as Middleton and Berington, would rise up to deny facts, so certain and incontestible? You have instructed us what to think of the miracles of the twelfth century, in the irreligious sarcasms you pass upon the two great bulwarks of the church, in the same, St. Bernard and St. Thomas. The former you represent, sometimes as a juggler, who imposes upon others, sometimes as a dupe, who is imposed upon himself in the splendid miracles ascribed to

* This infidel historian, the oracle of Gibbon, bears ample testimony, in his *history*, to that astonishing miracle, by which the Almighty defeated the efforts of the Jews in the time of the Emperor Julian to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem.

him.

him *. The latter, whom you had undertaken to defend, against the aspersions of his enemies, you treacherously abandon, asserting that "his cause wears few marks of christian truth †:" but what relates to the present purpose is, that you endeavour to deprive this cause of the testimony of the Almighty in its favor ‡ by an empty descant on the alledged "ignorance of the laws of nature" in the men of those times and the "inaptitude of their philosophy to examine witnesses and discuss facts §" as if the age, which produced a Bernard and

* Hist. of Abeil. pp 366, 367.

† History of the reign of Henry II. p. 240. The cause in which St. Thomas Becket shed his blood is vindicated as soon as related Four armed ruffians, without any kind of authority, real or pretended, attack him at the altar, and, with uplifted swords, require him to reverse an ecclesiastical censure, which he, as the proper judge, had pronounced. He refuses to yield to such a requisition, and thus dies in defence of the divine right and independancy of spiritual jurisdiction.—No wonder "his cause wears few marks of truth" in the eyes of Mr. B.

‡ See Bossuets Variations. L. vii.

§ Ibid. p. 272.

a Thomas and your own great man Abelard, was incapable of observing the difference between the states of blindness and sickness, for example, on one hand, and those of seeing and perfect health on the other! To you, Sir, I know it will cost little to deny the testimony of a St. Bonaventure, in favor of the miracles of a St. Francis, or of a St. Teresa relating those of a St. Peter of Alcantara: not to speak of the other innumerable favors, of a supernatural nature conferred upon each of that constellation of illustrious saints, whom God raised up, in the same century, to support his church, under that dreadful apostacy, to which Luther gave a beginning, amongst which those ascribed to the apostle of the Indies were, as might be expected, the most numerous and the most splendid.

At length we are come down to our own times, when, to guard against the effects of imposture, on one side, and of incredulity, on the other, the church has instituted the strictest juridical process with respect to the miracles attributed to saints, that it was possible

possible to devise, and when she required as clear and as convincing evidence for the admission of every fact of this nature, as would suffice in most countries for a capital conviction. Yet, in spite of this rigid caution, not one of those bright stars, with which God continues to adorn his militant church, until the destined number of the elect be completed, not one of them, I say down to the blessed *Mary of the Incarnation*, the brief of whose beatification lies before me, has been inscribed in our sacred calendar, in whose favor not only heroic sanctity, but also miracles, beyond the reach even of infidel criticism, both for their nature and attestations, have not been thus incontestably proved. All this, Sir, you are apprized of, but the present inquests of the sacred Congregation of Rites, published to the universal church by the sovereign Pontiff, have no more weight with you, than the voice of past ages and the testimony of the holy fathers: you represent the whole as "the resource of human contrivance," in order "to dupe mankind."

In conformity with this system you write as follows: "About twelve years ago, Rome
 "and other parts of Europe resounded with
 "the report of miracles, wrought by a celebrated beggar, who at that time died,
 "named Labre. I remember to have read
 "their history, which was circulated with
 "much ardour: but the Jesuits, with or
 "without reason, suspecting the holy man
 "of Jansenism, decried his miracles, and
 "raised another Thaumaturgus of their
 "own society, who then opportunely died
 "at Toulouse, to oppose the current of his
 "fame. So is mankind duped *." But
 by whom, Sir, are they duped? I answer, by
 the unblushing confidence of modern philosophers, who stick at no falsehoods to
 wrest from them the sacred resource of re-

* *Exam.* p. 29. It is not improper to mention that the miracles in question were so incontestible, as to have produced the conversion of the Rev. Mr. Thayer a dissenting clergyman of Boston, who was upon the spot, and examined many of them, with the utmost attention. See the motives of the latter's conversion, published by himself and sold by J. P. Coghlan.

ligion,

Ugion, their only comfort amidst the calamities of life, their only hope for that untied scene of being, on the verge of which they stand. I say then it is false, that the renowned society, which you have mentioned, whose best defence and panegyric is that they are always the first object of attack to the infidels of the age, it is false, I say, that they ever decried that happy poor man of Jesus Christ, whom you have in derision and as a parable of reproach, Wisdom. c. 5. as guilty of Jansenism, or that they strove to impede the fame of his sanctity or miracles. It is still more obviously false that they raised up the holy Jesuit of Toulouse in opposition to him: they well knew there were mansions enough in heaven, both for Venerable Labre and for Pere Seranne. It is even false that they ever described the latter as a *Thaumaturgus* at all, however eminent for his sanctity, or that they attributed any miracles to him. I ask now, Sir, who it is that attempts to dupe mankind? If your censure, above quoted, falls anywhere, it falls upon the church, which has

instituted a regular process for examining the miracles and virtues of happy Labre, in order to his beatification, and which has already taken the first step towards the same by proclaiming him *Venerable*.

Now that I am upon this subject, I must obviate one objection, which you have raised against the fame of this venerable personage. "I have been told," you say, "that a late papal envoy to this country, if he be not still here, was greatly instrumental in proving, during the process of the canonization of Labre, that *so far from working miracles and being a saint,*" you give these as his words, "*he was hardly a Catholic*." This anecdote, which is calculated to confound and scandalize the uninformed, will cause a smile in those who are acquainted with the official situation which that gentleman held at his own court. It is proper then to notice that in the rigid process, which I have mentioned above, for inquiring into the sanctity and miracles of holy persona-

ges, who are proposed to be inserted in the sacred calendar, one precaution of the holy See is to appoint an official accuser, whose business it is to anticipate every objection which the incredulity and ingenuity even of a Mr. Berington can possibly start; which objections are allowed their full weight in stopping the process, until they are clearly obviated. It is just as reasonable to pronounce on the real opinions of a disputant in the schools, from the arguments which he may employ against the propounded thesis, as it is to apply the above expressions (should they be authentic, and should not your circuitous information have misled you) either to the merits of Venerable Labre, or to the genuine sentiments of the gentleman in question concerning them.

It is time, Sir, to make an end of the present question concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers under the law of grace, no less than under the written law of nature. If you are not convinced on this head by the doctrine and
practice

practice of the church, listen, at least, to the clearest testimonies of the written word of God. You will find then that a more abundant effusion of God's spirit, in signs and wonders than had heretofore existed was foretold of these latter days by the prophet Joel, and interpreted, in this very sense, by St Peter. Acts ii. 16. You will find Jesus Christ himself unequivocally promising the same, as the fruit of our faith and not the cause of it: *These signs, says he, shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover.* St. Mark c. 16. v. 17. Again, *Verily verily I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.* St. John c. 14. v. 12. To the objections of the infidel on the score of these promises, the Catholic confidently and truly answers, that Christ has fulfilled them in favor of his faithful, by the nume-

rous and unquestionable miracles which have taken place during every age, in the true church since its foundation. But what answer can you, Sir, and Dr. Middleton make to the same?

But it would be an injustice to the cause, which I have undertaken, to omit stating that the continuation of miracles in the true church, is not only a point, which is taught by all her holy fathers, recorded by all her most enlightened historians * and believed by all her children, in every age and in every country, but also that the same is one of her distinguishing prerogatives, one of the marks, by which she is known from other societies, who are not like her *under the protection of the God of heaven*, Ps. 90. This characteristic, or mark of the true church, is not only assigned by our our most eminent divines and controvertists of the present day, such as Bellar-

* Such as Eusebius, Theodoret, Socrates, Zozomen, Evagrius, &c.

mine*, Howarden†, Manning‡, Walton§ and Hook||, but also by the holy fathers, in their disputes with the hereticks of their respective times, particularly by St. Ireneus¶ and St. Augustine**. And why is it, Sir, that you are desirous of stripping the church of this her glorious prerogative, and depriving our wandering brethren of this easy clue to guide them to her. Dr. Middleton who first set up this new and sceptical system, has let us into the secret of it: "By granting them," (the Catholics) says he, "a single age of miracles, after the time of the apostles, we shall be intangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, till we allow the same powers also to the present age."||| Again he tells us, "Those eminent divines

* Tom. 2. cap. 14. de notis Ecclesiae.

† True Church of Christ.

‡ Cases stated.

§ Miraculous powers.

|| Tom. 3. de notis Ecclesiae.

¶ Lib. 2. Contra Har.

** St. Aug. contra Epist. Fundam. & de Util. Cred.

||| Free Inquiry. p. 69.

“ (Dr Waterland and Dr. Chapman) seem
 “ unwarily to have betrayed the protestant
 “ cause, by transferring the miraculous
 “ powers of the church, the pretended en-
 “ signs of truth and orthodoxy, into the
 “ hands of its enemies for it was in
 “ these very primitive ages, in which the
 “ chief corruptions of popery were intro-
 “ duced the use of pictures, images,
 “ relicks, &c. * ” Will any person, after
 this doubt what school you have been stu-
 dying in, or why you are desirous of clos-
 ing with the “ defenders of our common
 “ christianity ” who have “ fortunately sur-
 “ rendered this point ” of the continuance
 of miracles, and are “ satisfied with what
 “ God has done for his own work in the
 “ foundation of christianity ? ”

* Ibid. Introduct. “ After the conversion of the
 “ Roman empire,” says he, “ we shall find the great-
 “ est part of their boasted miracles to have been
 “ wrought either by monks, or relicks, or by the sign
 “ of the cross, or consecrated oil: wherefore if we
 “ admit the miracles, we must necessarily admit the
 “ rites for the sake of which they were wrought, they
 “ both rest on the same bottom.”

II. §.

II. §.

In denying the succession of miracles you have "surrendered a point," and that one of the strong buttresses of the catholic cause: but in the criteria and the evidence of miracles which you have attempted to substitute for those hitherto received you have equally undermined the "sure basis" of our common christianity."

You will please to observe then, that I am far from being the advocate of the innumerable crude stories, which are reported as miraculous, or which have been recorded as such by a *Jacobus de Vitriaco*, or a *Vincen-tius Belluacensis* *. I am aware that the existence of real facts must ever give rise to fiction, real miracles to the delusion of imposture and credulity †. Hence I admit it

* The former author of the *Legenda Aurea*. The latter of the *Speculum Historiale*.

† This reminds me to notice the argument which Mr. B. draws against miracles in general from the jan-senistical impostures performed at the tomb of Abbé Paris,

to be a commendable quality in Christians at large, and one essentially necessary in the pastors of the church, to entertain a suspicious jealousy with respect to all reported prodigies, and not to admit them, much less to publish them, without sufficient

Paris. For even Jansenists have, in their turn, pretended to miracles. To this effect, they collected assemblages of stone-eaters and fire-eaters, and fool-hardy wretches, who submitted to be trampled upon, or to have pins and needles thrust into their flesh, in attestation that Abbè Paris was a saint, who enabled them to endure all this, without flinching. The most common prodigy however of all, was that, which is exhibited so often in our streets, no less than in private houses, for a proper consideration; I mean convulsion fits and the magnetic crisis. Is such the character of the miracles proved in the Sacred Congregation, at the canonization of saints?—With respect to the cure of real disorders, we have sufficient evidence of the death of persons, occasioned by swallowing the dirt of the Abbè's sepulchre, amongst the rest was the Duke of Anjou, but none, by unexceptionable witnesses, of the former having been performed.—Do the enchantments of Pharaoh's magicians destroy the credit of the miracles of Moses?

E

evidence

evidence of their authenticity*: to prevent, as much as in them lies, the genuine operations of the divine power from being involved in the disgrace of human imposture. I know also that this principle is carried so far, in the regular tribunal of the church, that out of forty miracles reported & even proved, to the satisfaction of a candid individual, not more than one, upon an average, is published to the faithful, & that many other prodigies and revelations, of a private nature, which happen in various parts of the church, are cautiously suppressed by its pastors, to prevent the blasphemous sarcasms of the irreligious. In a word, Sir, we are agreed that there are certain criteria or marks for judging of the credit due to reported miracles, or, as you express it, in language, not the most elegant and perspicuous that your classical taste might have selected: "Though it belongs not to
 "man to measure the times or the occa-

* The Church, in her last general council, has enjoined this, *Trid. Sess. 25. De Invoc. &c.*

" fions,

“ fions, when it shall be proper for the di-
 “ vine agency to act : but by referring to
 “ the miracles of the gospel” (and, I hope
 “ likewise of the old scripture) “ and of the
 “ apostolic ages he has a clue given to form
 “ some judgment *.” I am not, Sir, going
 to write a treatise upon miracles. Men in-
 finitely better qualified for this task than
 either you or myself have given mankind
 every information possible on this subject,
 especially the late learned Pontiff Bene-
 dict XIV †. All that I shall attempt is, to
 confute what you have written upon this
 subject, and to shew (admitting the very
 clue you point out) into what labyrinths of
 error and impiety the unsuspecting travel-
 ler would be conducted by following you
 for his guide.

The first of your rules, which I shall
 notice is this: “ in the government of the
 “ moral world, providence is not known
 “ to interpose miraculously, where, as a-
 “ mongst a christian people, all the ordina-

* Exam. p. 6.

† De Canonizat. SS.

"ry means have been provided for instruc-
 "tion, exhortation and the application of
 "other spiritual remedies *." The falsity
 of this rule has already been demonstrated
 by the succession of miracles, which provi-
 dence has been proved actually to have
 performed amongst Christians, in every
 age since christianity was first promulgated.
 And with respect to the principle itself, on
 which the present rule is grounded, we ob-
 serve, on recurring to the scripture mira-
 cles, that not only instruction and exhorta-
 tion have been the objects of the same, but
 a variety of other ends, as the support com-
 fort or illustration of God's servants †, the
 present punishment of his enemies, or the
 removal of those sensible or insensible ob-
 stacles, which have opposed the execution
 of his high decrees. Let it suffice here to
 allude to the ravens which fed Elias in the

* P. 23.

† "Vera miracula non semper sunt ad confirman-
 "dam fidem, sed interdum ad illustrandam sanctorum
 "vitam." Bellarmin, tom. 2. c. 14.

desert,

desert, the flames which devoured his enemies, the chariot that transported him from the midst of mortals, the unwholesome waters and poisonous pottage rendered innoxious by the inheritor of his spirit, the mystery of the transfiguration and innumerable other incidents recorded in sacred writ, which very much resemble what you impiously term the "wild tales that fill the legends of the saints*," and which were neither necessary nor primarily intended for the instruction or exhortation of mankind, but for a variety of other obvious causes. Who is the presumptuous mortal that dares to hold this language to his Creator: *thou canst not interpose miraculously in the government of the moral world, unless it be to instruct or to exhort me?*

We may argue in a similar manner, with respect to a second criterion of miracles, which you establish, where you say that, "nothing undefined, in its object, can introduce a suspension in the established laws of nature†." It must be owned that

* P. 31.

† p. 6.

E. 3.

the

the sense of this passage is very undefined, but if any meaning at all can be extracted from it, we are to understand, that the Almighty cannot work a miracle, unless we can positively pronounce on the final cause, for which he works it; (for of the hidden motives of the Deity we can form no judgment, and of course they cannot constitute any kind of criterion or mark in our regard). To demonstrate the fallacy of this rule, it will be sufficient to remit you to what your learned adversary, four years ago, objected to you on this head, to whose masterly reprehension * you have never yet been able to make any other answer, except what he and I, in common with three of your chosen friends, heard from your lips with astonishment, *that he had not taken all the advantages of your errors, which he might have taken, and that you could have easily extracted much more faulty passages from your writings, than those which he denounced to your Bishop†.* You will recollect then, that he

* Remarkson the writings of the Rev. Joseph Berington.

† See Remarks on Memoirs of Greg: Panzani, p. 24. p. 32. p. 310.

reminds you of the permission which our blessed Saviour gave to a legion of wicked spirits to take possession of the bodies of a great herd of swine*: The fact all christians must admit, but to define the object of the same, with any degree of certainty, has eluded the ingenuity and learning of the most eminent interpreters and holy fathers. To this instance of a supernatural fact, without a defined object, may be added that recorded in sacred writ of the appearance of armed men being seen in the air above Jerusalem fighting†. The spectators were so little acquainted with the precise object of this miraculous phenomenon, that they prayed it might prognosticate prosperity to them.

A third touchstone of prodigies, which you produce, is that "nothing mean, ludicrous or unworthy the ruler of the universe can be the subject of a divine interposition‡." This, Sir, indeed would be a rule for judging of what is miraculous,

* S. Mat. c. 8.

† 2 Maccab. c. 5.

‡ Pages 5, 6.

" a rule

if we were but possessed of another rule for judging of what is mean and ridiculous. How many things, for example, which you have derided as ridiculous, or condemned as mean and unworthy of the Deity, are viewed with awe and retained with devotion by genuine catholics? I fancy, upon recollection, you will be for retracting this rule. For tell me, Sir, had you been present when the prophet, advancing into the midst of the people, cut off his hair, and weighing it into three equal parts burnt one part, chopped another into pieces, and scattered the third in the wind, declaring that he did so in consequence of a divine revelation*, would not you, according to your rule just mentioned, have denied his mission, and declared, that such actions were ridiculous and unworthy to be the subject of a supernatural revelation? In like manner, Sir, had it been recorded of any saint in the calendar that he had performed a miracle in multiplying frogs, or in producing swarms of lice†, to punish an impious

* Ezechiel, c. 5.

† Exod. c. 8.

people, I can venture to pronounce, from the language you have already held, that you would cry out blasphemy against those who could assert that omnipotence had been displayed in so mean and ludicrous a manner. If, Sir, you had studied philosophy to a better purpose, you would have discovered the congruity of the Almighty's accommodating his speaking signs and wonders to the conceptions and manners of these whom he addresses. And had you not totally forgotten your theology you would have known that God chooses *the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the base things of the world and the contemptible that no flesh should glory in his sight.* 1 Cor. c. 1. v. 27. For my part, I do not affirm that withered lilies in Italy have budded by a divine interposition, but I cannot see that such an effect is less worthy the divine interposition than the super-natural withering of a gourd which just before was in full leaf *. I do not say that God has interfered to give

* Jonas, c. 4.

animal motion to holy images, but I can see nothing more ridiculous in such an effect, than in his having given a similar kind of movement to idolatrous statues in the presence of the ark, which was itself no more than a sacred emblem*.

You have yet one more criterion for judging of prodigies, and this furnishes you with your chief and victorious argument, as you exultingly describe it, for rejecting those reported from Italy. "The God of truth," you say, "can not teach nor admit error†;" the facts in question "tend to deteriorate the species, to strengthen superstition, and to alienate the mind from just notions of religion‡."—But what is the error and the superstition in question, which any miracles performed by pictures or statues is calculated to strengthen? As far as it is possible to form a judgment from the whole of what you assert in the present and in your preceding works, it appears that you are desirous of banishing entirely the use and veneration of holy

* 1 Kings. c. 5,

† p. 27.

‡ p. 6.

pictures

pictures and statues, as furnishing a certain and inevitable source of superstition, to the populace, that is, to the great bulk of christians. For in attempting to prove the alleged "prevalence of the evil*" viz. the superstition in question, which you tell us "is widely spread through the churches of Italy†" you describe "the populace in the streets of Rome and in the cathedral of Ancona as raising their eyes to their images with a veneration as superstitious as did the Ephesians to the statues of their Diana‡." But why this squeamishness Mr. Berington? Why you do call that *superstition*, which you endeavour to prove is *idolatry*? For such incontestably was the veneration paid to Diana. Why do you hesitate to speak out the whole doctrine of your Master Middleton, who has written a book § to prove that the religion of Pagan Rome has been changed only in *form* and not in *substance*, and that the inhabitants of

* P. 25.

† P. 24,

‡ P. 26.

§ *Letter from Rome.*

it are as much idolaters at the present day as ever they were? But no: this is not the occasion roundly to assert a proposition so alarming: you satisfy yourself with establishing the premises, and leave the reader to draw the conclusion; which however follows as clearly from them as in the best formed syllogism that ever I heard from the benches of the logicians. There are other inuendo's of the same meaning in the pamphlet before me, as where you speak of the statues, as *living intelligent personages* in the most sarcastical and irreligious strain. For example you say: "How natural was it, when our Lady of Ancona had moved her eyes, that some lady of the Roman capital should follow her example*." In the following sentence, also, with equal sarcasm, you describe the pictures as the *agents*, not as the *objects* of the prodigies, where you speak of them, (in italics) as *imitating*, and, in another place, as taking the lead of each other: whilst the

* P. 8.

people are represented as praying to the picture itself of the blessed Virgin before them; such at least is the idea which the passage furnishes, in conjunction with the rest of the context. On other occasions, Sir, you have declared your sentiments with less artifice, against the use and veneration of holy images in general. Thus, for example, you laugh at, "as unworthy the service of our Maker the nitching of Mawmets * in churchest†." In like manner you compare the veneration paid by christians to holy statues, with that of the Pagans to their idols‡, and pronounce that "a nation of philosophers or (even) of cool christians would erect no breathing statues§." Finally where you speak (as I am convinced that it is you who speak) without constraint, because anonymously, you confidently exclaim; "I would

* *A Mawmet: A Puppet anciently an Idol.* Johnson's Dictionary.

† Reflections to Hawkins, p. 74

‡ History of Henry II. p. 619.

§ Ibid.

“become an Iconoclast to promote the
 “ worship of the living God*.”

That images may be an occasion of superstition to some individuals in Italy, as well as elsewhere is very possible, but I maintain that there is neither proof nor probability of their being oftener so in that than in other parts of the church, as Spain, Portugal, the East and the Low Countries, much less of such alledged danger being greater now than at the time of the second Nicene Council and of the Council of Trent, both of which, with full knowledge of the cause, in despite of the cool christianity of philosophic innovators, decide “ that the images of Christ, the
 “ blessed Virgin Mother of God and of
 “ the other saints are to be kept and re-
 “ tained, particularly in the churches, and
 “ that due honor and veneration is to be
 “ paid to them: not that any divinity or
 “ virtue is believed to be in them, for which

* *Considerations addressed to the French Bishops and Clergy now residing in England. 1796.*

“ they

" they are to be honored, or that any thing
 " is to be asked of them, or that any confi-
 " dence is to be placed in them, as the
 " Gentiles did of old with respect to their
 " idols*." This, Sir, is the identical cate-
 chism, taught by the pastors of Italy to
 their flocks, as it is by other pastors, and
 ever has been, throughout the whole uni-
 versal church. But you, in the face of a
 Protestant public, who make this very plea
 the main ground of their refusing to enter
 into our communion, misrepresent the
 Church, even in her head-quarters of Italy
 and Rome, as so infected with superstition,
 or rather idolatry, that it is impossible for
 the Almighty to make images the subject of
 his miraculous operations, because this
 would lead to a " conclusion that the peo-
 " ple's former notions about them and their
 " miraculous powers were consistent with
 " the genuine tenets of christian faith†."

* Concil. Trid. Sess. 25,

† P. 27.

I now call upon you, in the face of the public, to enter with me into a discussion of the grounds on which you have brought so revolting and so scandalous a charge against one of the greatest as well as most illustrious portions of the church, and which is seen equally to apply to each other portion of it, in every realm and in every age: a charge, which, if it is admitted, certainly calls for the utter destruction of holy pictures and statues.

To prove how "widely spread the superstition (in question) is through the churches of Italy" you say; "I quote not the authority of modern travellers, but I quote the learned and temperate Muratori?" But you do not tell us a word of what he says, except that "notorious sinners and highway assassins have been seen to light up tapers before some holy image, or to carry about with them the relics of saints*." How this quotation militates, or how it is intended to militate I am un-

* Pages 24, 28.

able to judge? Are we to conclude that the practices in question, are superstitious in themselves, or superstitiously intended, because they are adopted by bad men?

But: "so late" you say, "as the year 1787 the Bishops of the Dukedom of Tuscany discussed the abuses of image worship, the existence of which was denied by none, and projected means for their suppression but the efforts of these enlightened men did not completely succeed. They were opposed by a party interested in the perpetuation of abuses*."

In what these alledged abuses consisted, how widely they were spread, who their enlightened opposers, or their interested abettors were, you do not think proper to inform us. However a work of the present Pontiff, published within these two years†, gives us all necessary information on these points. From this we learn that the Janse- nistical faction, which overturned religion

* P. 25:

† Smi. D. D. Pii VI. Damnatio Synodi Pistoienfis.

under the late Emperor Joseph in Lombardy, Germany and the Low Countries, upon the pretence of reforming it, about the date you assign, presumed to hold a schismatical Conciliabulum at Pistoja in Tuscany, under the directions of the unfortunate Ricci, Bishop of the same place, where, amongst other religious opinions and practices, approved of by the church, they undertook to cashier or alter several that related to images*. The public has the work before them, which has lately been re-published for their use, a work which your above mentioned anonymous essay, as might be expected, loudly complains of.† In fact it is an anticipated condemnation of your own projected reform, which is evidently borrowed from the decrees of Pistoja.

You have one more argument to prove "the prevalence of the evil" in question.

* See in the above work, the Propositions 69. 70. 71. 72.

† See the above quoted *Considerations*, p. 66.

" Their

" Their *devotion*", you say (that of the people of Ancona) " we may be allowed to " think was a *superstitious veneration*; which " is confirmed by what is added, that they " first repaired to the Cardinal Bishop to " demand the opening of a coffin, which " contained the body of a favorite saint*."

All, Sir, that can be collected from this passage is, that you are unsound in your belief, with respect to Relics, no less than you are with respect to holy images. The Church declares that " the holy bodies of " the martyrs and of others, who live with " Christ are to be venerated by the " faithful, and that through them many " benefits are conferred by God upon " ment†." The people of Ancona confined their practice within the bounds of this doctrine. They were terrified with an alarm of a general massacre about to ensue and betaking themselves to God in prayer, they were desirous of availing

* P. 12.

† Concil. Trid. Sess. 25.

themselves

themselves of the intercession of a holy bishop of their city, the festival of whose beatification (on which occasion miracles must have been proved) they had celebrated not many weeks before-hand, and they very naturally and piously paid that veneration to the standing miracle of his uncorrupted body which the church authorizes and commends. But this you pronounce to be superstition; a censure, that falls upon the church herself, which has always inculcated a belief that the relicks of saints have been the instruments in the hands of God of the most splendid miracles. The censure even falls upon the sacred scriptures, which inform us that a dead and mangled body was restored to life by being made to touch the relicks of a holy prophet*. "In cool expostulation let me ask" in my turn: Have you proved your charge of superstition and idolatry against the people and the churches of Italy?

* 4 Kings, c. 13.

III. §.

Had you, Sir, in your late attack upon the Miraculous Events reported from Italy, contented yourself with impeaching the credit due to the reporters of them: had you objected to their personal senses, their discernment, their number, &c. had you adduced either positive or negative arguments against their individual testimony, interested as I particularly am for the credit of one honest, and intelligent man amongst them, I should not probably have called you to the present serious reckoning, but should have left you to the pen of your female opponent. But you have conducted your examination upon such infidel principles, as not only to weaken but absolutely to destroy the credit of the scripture prodigies. In a word you deny the evidence of the senses, with respect to miracles at large; You suppose that 160,000 people (for you take the accounts as they are delivered in the published letters) might have been deceived

ceived for twelve days and nights together, in supposing they beheld animal motion, where no such motion existed. This is not a new system. It was upon the self-same ground that you chiefly rested your attempts to reduce the miracles of St. Bernard and St. Thomas to the rank of delusions. In a word you invert the established order of sound reason and of the Catholic church, in judging of the reality of the prodigy by the doctrine which it attests, instead of judging of the doctrine by the prodigy. You carry this presumptuous scepticism so far as to protest, in the following outrageous strain: "Had I been at Ancona or at Rome, when the reported prodigies were performed, and all my senses, with the clearest evidence, had attested their reality, I must have rejected it, or subscribed to blasphemy*." On the same fatal principle have our misguided brethren of the Reformation been deaf to the voice of God, which has so often attested the truth of our

* P. 27.

tenets and practices by incontestible miracles. In vain do we call their attention to these divine testimonies: their answer is the same with yours: *We must reject your miracles, they say, or subscribe to the superstitions attested by them.* On the same false principle the Jews rejected the miracles wrought by our blessed Saviour, on many occasions, but particularly in their examination of the man born blind*. "*We know*" said they, "*that God spoke to Moses;*" of course we cannot admit of the miracles which tend to abrogate his law. The same is the principle and almost the same, you well know, Sir, is the very language of modern Deists and infidels, in rejecting the whole collection of supernatural events recorded in the gospel. *Though I were to see,* says a Rousseau, as also a Diderot, *a Lazarus raised from the dead in attestation of your unintelligible mysteries of christianity, it would produce no change in my sentiments: because my senses may deceive me, but my reason cannot*

* St. John, c. 9.

deceive me. I will not put arguments into the mouths of infidels, but I defy you to say any thing, in the supposed case, either on the score of optical delusions, of the ignorance or enthusiasm of the witnesses, which the Deist and the Jew will not apply, with as much plausibility, to the glorious miracle of the gospel mentioned above. The chief difference will be, between yourself and the deluded Deist or Jew, that they will argue in conformity with their respective systems, whilst you act in opposition to yours, according to which the church alone definitively pronounces what is and is not superstitious, no less than what is and is not religious.

You have yet one sophism in store for denying the evidence of the senses with respect to miracles: "Are the witnesses," you say, "ignorant of a great occasion, "when by the tenets of their faith they "profess not to believe the testimony of "their senses?" No, Sir, they are not ignorant of that occasion. But in this instance they sacrifice the testimony of their
senses

senses to the Divine veracity, speaking to them by his unerring church, which church was chiefly founded on sensible miracles. Whereas in the case supposed in your pamphlet, namely that their own senses, and those of a hundred thousand other witnesses, should permanently attest the existence of a miracle, performed by the instrumentality of a holy image, should they disbelieve their senses, as you require them to do, on the ground that the Almighty cannot make an image the object of his supernatural power, they would have no better ground to go upon than the unwarranted and erroneous opinions of Mr. Berington concerning the superstitious effects of holy images in general, and the prevalence of idolatry in the capital of the christian world*.

IV. §.

* The danger of superstition and idolatry with respect to the abuse of holy images, must have been equal or nearly equal amidst the great body of Christians at all times: the same also must have existed at least in the same degree, amidst God's people of old, with respect to the ark of the covenant, the rod of

G

Aaron,

IV. §.

Having, Sir, finished my review of your pamphlet concerning miracles, I am induced to cast my eyes back, on the preceding productions of your prolific pen. Had the irreligious performance in question been your first, or were there a prospect that it would be your last attack on the discipline and tenets of your mother church, I should not probably have called the public attention to the dangerous principles which it

Aaron, &c.: yet the most authentic pages of ecclesiastical history inform us of many indubitable prodigies performed in favor of the former, no less than the scripture does of the astonishing miracles of which the latter were the instruments. On the present occasion I shall only refer to the celebrated Eusebius, who in his History, lib. 7. tells us that the woman cured by our Lord of a bloody flux, upon her return to her own city, caused a statue of him to be erected, from the pedestal of which a certain herb grew, which cured various distempers. This history, which bears some resemblance with one which Mr. Berington has ridiculed, proves, at least, the sentiments of the Fathers in the fourth age of the church.

involves;

involves; but your "progress," as you rightly term it, has been uniform and uninterrupted, "since about twenty years ago "that you commenced author*:" but it has been a progress in the by-paths of error! Even now your fertile imagination is taken up with fresh machinations against the peace of the church, in this day of her extreme affliction and humiliation. It were natural to fancy from your conduct that, instead of cherishing you, as a favorite son, and suffering your irregularities, with an almost unprecedented patience, she had like an unnatural step-mother, sought your utter ruin. Let me recollect; how many new works, in the same style with the former, as their titles and description prove, have you given the public notice to expect from you? There is, 1st, your aforesaid "*Progress (in irreligion) since about twenty years that you commenced author:*" 2dly, "*A work in defence of the oath of supre-*

* *Memoirs of Panzani*, Pref. p. xxx.

"macy", in which you undertake "to
 "dissipate the whole charm of prejudice,"
 which causes our bishops to condemn it,
 and has caused hundreds of martyrs to re-
 fuse it, when they might have purchased
 their lives by so doing: 3dly, "*A History*
 "of the Rise, the Progress and the Decline of
 "the Papal Power, to consist, at least, of five
 "volumes in quarto," now advertised, a se-
 cond time in your late pamphlet, which also
 appears to give a *prospectus* of it, in your
 "general truths," concerning the power of
 the priesthood being founded on opinion,
 supported by false prodigies, &c.† In a
 word, Sir, I have long studied your writ-
 ings and your conduct, and I have obser-
 ved in them both, a regular combined plan,
 which at different times has been more or less
 successful, for effecting a revolution in the
 government, the discipline and the faith of
 our church, on the self same plan, on which
 it has, within these few years, been attempt-

* *Memoirs*, &c. p. 11.

† *Ibid.* Pref. p. xix.—*Examination.*

ted in Tuscany, in Lombardy, in Germany, in Brabant, and in France itself, during the early part of the present antichristian apostacy *. Hence I have no difficulty in pronouncing that *Beringtonianism* is not more a phantom than is its parent *Jansenism*. I shall produce proofs, alas! too numerous and too pregnant, in the following pages, of the truth of this assertion. In the mean time, to those uninformed Catholics, who may be startled at the declaration that, not a bare difference of opinion, upon one or two convertible points, but absolutely different religious systems prevail amongst men, whom they have considered as forming one body, it may be proper to observe, that it is the Rev. Joseph Berington, who has first published this truth to the world: for having been called to an account by an author of

* The late revolution in the church of France was begun by Camus, Tréhilard and other Jansenists, who devised, what was called, *The Civil Constitution of the French Clergy*. It will be remembered how earnestly we were called upon, at its first appearance, to copy the same; as the necessary mode of reforming alledged abuses and of conforming to primitive discipline.

approved talents and orthodoxy, and denounced to his bishop, as guilty of various errors against the faith of the church, in a work of victorious argument * he adduces a formal declaration, to the said effect, in excuse for not replying to the charges brought against him: "My religion, I solemnly declare," he says, "is not his" (Mr. Plowden's) or that of his admirers†." In like manner, to my earnest call upon him to retract his numerous errors, on the score of the detriment these have done to the souls of many‡: he thus replies, "It rejoices me to hear that in his" (Mr. M—s) estimation, I have done detriment to the souls of many; because, "in that case, I know, I have essentially served them: I have opened to them "the realms of truth§." It is Mr. Be-

* *Remarks on the writings of the Rev. Joseph Berington by the Rev. Charles Plowden.*

† *Memoirs*, Pref. p. xxxiv.

‡ *Ecclesiastical Democracy Detected*, p. 91.

§ *Memoirs*, Pref. p. xxx.

rington then, who is not an obscure man, but an author of literary renown, that publishes the alarming position, that he has *not the same religion* with avowed Catholic writers or with their admirers, but that the doctrines which they pronounce *detrimental to souls* he knows to be *serviceable to them*. The question then is which of these religions is the true one. Now it so happens that Messieurs Plowden and Milner, whether they are good men or bad men, disciples of Christ or Pharisees * are, in fact and in principle, orthodox members of the catholic religion, being acknowledged as such by their pastors, who are in communion with the whole church, and what is more, they are determined to continue such, by their avowed readiness, at all times, to submit their own opinions to the tribunal abovementioned. Mr. Berington then, in proclaiming himself not to be of their religion, proclaims himself not to be of the catholic religion, but of some sect or other,

* *Ibid.* from p. xxi. to p. xxxii.

which,

which, from his early and persevering endeavours to propagate it, ought, in justice, to receive its denomination from him.

But who am I, you will object, to detect growing errors and ecclesiastical revolutions? I will not lay claim to a writer's privilege even with respect to publications, in which I myself am a party attacked, but I will answer you, Sir, that I am a Catholic, anxious for the unity and orthodoxy of the true church, and for the salvation of souls. For I learn from our present supreme Pastor, in a work which he has published against the self same errors, according to the doctrine of his holy predecessor, that "each novelty agitates the whole church*," and of course every member of it, and I observe, in ecclesiastical history, that men of inferior stations have often been the means of bringing the most fatal heresies to the knowledge and decision of the proper judges. I answer in the second place, that

* "*Universalis Ecclesia quacumque novitate pulsatur.*"

Pii 6. Dmanat. Pistoij. Prefat. p. 7. ex 8. Cælestino.

I am

I am an authorised teacher of the catholic faith, in the discharge of which duty it has sometimes been objected to me, that Mr. Joseph Berington, who is also a catholic priest, teaches a different doctrine from mine: it concerns me then that my flock should be enabled to judge whether I or he teach the faith of the Universal Church.

But this alledged anxiety for the purity of faith and the salvation of souls, you tell me, Sir, proves that I am "of the family of the Pharisees *," and one of "their genuine offspring †," of whose hypocrisy and wickedness you draw so hideous a portrait. To this I answer, that the same argument would prove that every saint in the calendar was a Pharisee. But observe, I pray you, Sir, that, admitting me and my friends to have all the vices you lay to our charge, and you and your friends to have all the virtues for which you take credit ‡, the

* *Memoirs*, Pref. p. xxx.

† *Ibid.* p. xxvii.

‡ *Ibid.* p. xxviii. also p. 325. "I strive, not I hope
quite successsfully to imbibe the spirit, and in a fee-
ble

the question is not now, nor ever has been, about our respective merits, but solely about the orthodoxy of our public doctrine.

Finally you roundly maintain, and by many long arguments endeavour to prove that those who bring forward charges of heretical and schismatical doctrine against others "are
 " not Christians, for they want the virtue essential to its nature, (charity) for can there
 " be a man that is not a rational animal,
 " or a brute that is not sensitive *?" You will excuse me, Sir, if upon the true nature and practice of charity, I rather adopt the maxims of that apostle of charity, St. Francis de Sales, in the passage quoted in the motto to this work, than yours. I am satisfied to take share in the censure, which you have also brought against the charitable, the mellifluous St. Bernard, in consequence of his having detected and denoun-

" ble transcript to copy the virtues of Andrew Brom-
 " wick who entertained every gentle and generous sentiment of a Christian, and was prepared to
 " die with a martyr's fortitude."

* *Memoirs*, Pref. p. xxvii,

ced

ced the heresies of your prototype Abeillard *. Or rather, in quality of a member of the church, I am content to take my part in that sentence which you pass even upon her, as destitute of a quality which you tell us is as essential to christianity, *as rationality is to man or sensation to brutes*: "I wish we (Catholics) were more tolerant and more charitable: all churches are intolerant and as such uncharitable †."— I am not, Sir, to be deterred by your imputations on my christianity, (but with due deference to superior authority and learning) from pointing out and even qualifying whatever positions I may discover in your writings, that appear erroneous, schismatical or heretical. In other respects, Sir, I should be sorry to make the style and language of one, who values himself on his moderation and breeding, the model of mine: hence instead of retorting such in-

* History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa, p. 278, &c.

† *Reflections address'd to Hawkins*, p. 30

dignant

dignant epithets as *Fellow*, *Ignorant Fellow*, *Pharisee*, *Tartuffe**, and the like, I will continue to address you as a gentleman, a scholar, and a moral man, but as one who has unfortunately swerved from the purity of catholic faith and the submission due to its lawful government.

There are some errors which are peculiar to each new sect, and there are others which are common to religious innovations in general; these tend to overturn or curtail the necessary authority of Christ's Vicar upon earth, and of other lawful superiors, the same by which all new doctrines are nipped in their bud, to establish an independant and self-erected jurisdiction in

* These expressions are the principal flowers of speech which adorn above a dozen pages of the above quoted Preface. The occasion of his terming the writer of this *an ignorant fellow*, is because he opposed the text of the Constitutions of Clarendon, as it occurs in Matthew Paris, who lived within a century of the facts which he relates, to the text of Mr. Berington, who is unable to bring any ancient author whomsoever in support of his falsifications.

its

its place, by such means as the circumstances of the times render most effectual for this purpose, and to create an opinion of the prevalence of superstition and abuses in the church, and of the general necessity of a reform in her. Let us see a few of the maxims which Mr. Berington has been in the course of publicly inculcating on these heads.

The divine authority of the holy See, and its bond of unity, with respect to the Universal Church, denied.

1. "He (the Pope) has indeed his prerogative: but we have our privileges, and are independent on him, except where it has pleased the community, for the sake of unity and good order, to surrender into his hands a limited superintendence *."

This, Sir, is the identical doctrine which the church has repeatedly anathe-

* *Reflections to the Rev. J. Hawkins* p. 69.

H

matized,

matized, in Marfillius of Padua, Antonio de Dominis, Edmund Richer, and in the late synod of Pistoja, who all of them have taught, though not in such express terms as you, that whatever authority the Pope possesses throughout the church, it is derived from the free gift of the church herself, and not from the divine constitution of Christ. It is not for me to qualify this proposition, since the supreme Pastor himself has so lately pronounced it to be, HERETICAL*.

2. "She (Rome) stood as a centre of
"union, conveying her energy through a
"thousand channels, whilst her emissaries
"at a distance maintained the illusion †."

This is advancing a step further than any of the above innovators have ventured, or

* *Damnatio Propos. Pistoja à Pio 6.*—*Propos. 3.* "Quæ
"statuit Romanum Pontificem esse Caput Ministeriale;—
"sic explicata, ut Romanus Pontifex non a Christo,
"in persona B. Petri, sed ab ecclesia potestatem mini-
"sterii accipiat, qua velut Petri Successor, verus
"Christi Vicarius ac totius Ecclesiæ Caput pollet in
"Universa Ecclesia,—HERETICA."

† *History of the reign of Henry 2.* p. 625.

even

even than the jansenistical authors of the *Civil Constitution of the Gallican Church* have proceeded. They were content to leave the Holy See, as a rallying point, or inanimate standard, after they had stripped it of all efficient power. Your proposition, Sir, which terms it *an illusion that Rome is a centre of union*, is incontestibly heretical.

Usurped and schismatical jurisdiction asserted.

3. "It is not necessary, that as he only can confer orders, who has been himself ordained, so he only can confer jurisdiction, who is himself canonically possessed of jurisdiction *."

This proposition, Sir, which will astonish every catholic canonist and divine, is nevertheless the necessary consequence of the republican system of church government which you have adopted; according to which the supreme Pastor derives his authority from his flock, and it is

* *Memoirs*, p. 292.

a principle necessary to be established, as a foundation for the schismatical proposals, which, we shall see, you are about to make to us. To my apprehension however it is, by a clear deduction, contrary to that decision of the council of Trent, in which those are anathematized who say that "persons not having a mission from ecclesiastical and canonical authority are lawful ministers of the word and the sacraments *," and as such it must be, at least, erroneous and schismatical.

4. "Each pastor in his parish, each bishop in his diocese, &c. is possessed of a proper and essential jurisdiction wholly uncontrollable by and independent of the See of Rome . . . such was the order divinely established by Christ †."

You have elsewhere spoken of the jurisdiction which is essential to bishops ‡, but here you extend the same to every pastor, to every metropolitan, and to every national

* Trid. Sess. 23. can. 7.

† *State and Behaviour*, p. 153.

‡ *Memoirs*, p. 102.

patriarch,

patriarch, whose respective ecclesiastical authority you tell us was divinely established by Christ. These will be news, Sir, to canonists, and they will be happy to hear in what chapter and verse of the scripture, or in what council they may find the ground-work of this singular assertion. But to be serious: if inferior pastors and prelates have an *independent, essential, divinely established jurisdiction, uncontrollably by the See of Rome*, then the Bishop of that See, "*the Vicar of God hereupon earth**" has not "*supreme authority, throughout the universal church,*" as the council of Trent declares him to have, then the council of Florence has defined a falsehood, viz. that, "*the Roman Pontiff has received full power from Christ to feed, rule and govern the whole church, as has been defined in the general councils, and as is contained in the sacred canons†.*" Permit me to tell you,

* *Trid. Sess. 6. cap. 1. de Ref. Ibid. Sess. 14. c. 7.*

† *Decret. Unionis.*

Sir, that the proposition before us is evidently erroneous in one respect, and heretical in another.

The renewal of erroneous and schismatical doctrines lately censured by our Bishops.

1. "The catholic clergy (in the reign
" of Queen Elizabeth) unanimously resolved to present a supplication to his
" Majesty, praying that he would restore to
" them an ecclesiastical hierarchy, in the
" government of bishops Had they de-
" liberated to better purpose, and consult-
" ing their church, chosen such a number
" of bishops, as the exigencies of the peo-
" ple required, the measure would have
" been more consonant with the spirit of
" primitive discipline *."

6. "Unabashed by refusals, however
" often repeated, rather than chuse their
" own bishops, which their own good sense,
" aided by reading, must have told them,
" was a measure most consistent with the

* *Memoirs*, p. 43.

“rules of venerable antiquity, the clergy
 “again (in the reign of King James I.)
 “applied to Rome *.”

According to the doctrine here laid down, our predecessors, even since the church has solemnly declared, in her last general council, that it *belongs to the Roman Pontiff to appoint pastors to all churches* †, would have deliberated to a better purpose, if instead of leaving the appointment to him, they had, by their own private authority, elected their own bishops, and even determined how many the exigencies of the people required, which implies the settling the limits of their jurisdiction, and the erection of new Sees. All which uncanonical and unprecedented conduct is pro-

* *Ibid.* p. 92.

† “*Romanus Pontifex ex muneris sui officio pastores singulis ecclesiis præficit.*” Trid. Sess. 24. cap. 1. de Reform. “*Adeoque legitima consecratio nulla fit in ecclesia catholica universa, nisi ex apostolicæ sedis mandato.*” These latter are the words of his present Holiness, reasoning upon the above passage of the council of Trent, in his Brief, April 13, 1791.

nounced

nounced to be conformable to good sense and the rules of venerable antiquity.—The whole of this doctrine, is a plain insinuation of error and schism, and, to my judgment, agrees in sense, with the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th propositions, censured by our Orthodox Prelates, in their *Pastoral Letter of December 26, 1792*: which they “prohibit their clergy, from preaching, teaching, maintaining or abetting, *under the penalty of suspension from all divine functions**.”

Propositions subversive of the lawful authority of our Pastors.

7. “I have shewn how abusive the government of our church is, and what are

* See the said Pastoral, pages 18, 19, 21. This Pastoral of his own Bishop, amongst the rest, Mr. Berrington scoffs at; comparing it to a merry play of Shakespear. (Much adoe about Nothing). *Memoirs*, Pref, xxiv. It is very natural that this gentleman, writing in support of the censured system, should set at defiance the condemnation of it.

“ its

“ its evils. Will it be said that they are
 “ not of a magnitude to call for redress?
 “ Will it be said that what our ancestors
 “ acquiesced in we should not attempt to
 “ reform * ?”

8. “ That the government by *Vicars* is
 “ *abusive*, will hardly, I think be denied,
 “ when the institution by Christ, as we
 “ conceive it, of ordinary episcopacy is
 “ admitted, from which that of *Vicars* is
 “ a plain and not a necessary deviation†.”

The Catholics of England are here assured that the authority of their present Bishops, the Vicars Apostolic, which they have been taught to consider, as strictly conformable to the general discipline of the church, where ever the Catholic religion is not predominant, is founded in *abuse*: which implies that it is unjust and null. They are even instructed, by one of their own clergy, a man of talents and learning, that this system, is “ a devia-

* *Memoirs*, p. 466.

† *Ibid*, p. 461.

" *tion from the institution of Christ*, which
 " every one knows, the church is not com-
 " petent to authorize." Hence we are
 very naturally told, in conformity with the
 democratic principles of the day, that
 though " *our ancestors acquiesced*" in this
 abuse, we ought " *to attempt to reform it.*"
 —Did I advance too much, Sir, when I said
 that you were bent upon bringing about a
 revolution in our ecclesiastical govern-
 ment? But what must be your opinion of
 the forbearance of that government
 which will leave such attempts in one
 of its own ministers unpunished?—Your
 above quoted propositions, Sir, together
 with many others, which it is in my power
 to bring forward, from the same work, are
 scandalous, subversive of the peace and ca-
 nonical government of our church, and di-
 rectly tend to a general schism: as such
 they have been censured in the 9th, 10th
 and 11th of the aforesaid condemned pro-
 positions*.

* *Pastoral Letter*, p. 20.

Schismatical claim to independent jurisdiction.

9. " The powers of our ministry (those
" of the Catholic Clergy) by an abuse,
" which acquiescence has sanctioned, are
" delegated to us*."

10. " With the Clergy *alone*, in my esti-
" mation, rests the choice of withdrawing
" their acquiescence from a system irregu-
" lar and abusive, and of vindicating to
" themselves the canonical rights of a pa-
" rochial ministry†."

The Catholic Clergy are here informed,
that if they continue to accept of the ju-
risdiction which is necessary for administer-
ing the sacraments, from their present su-
periors, the Vicars Apostolic, this is merely
the effect of their own *acquiescence*, inas-
much as the system itself is *irregular* and
abusive, and that they are competent to re-

* *Memoirs*, p. 445.

* *Ibid.* 446.

form the same at pleasure. The occasion of your broaching this pernicious doctrine, is in order to prove that the withdrawing of faculties from a certain clergyman, was *unjust, illegal and null*. But your assertion maintains that the clergy, in general, may assume ecclesiastical jurisdiction, without any delegation at all from their bishops, and may continue to exercise it in despite of their prohibition.—The doctrine in question is subversive of all ecclesiastical subordination and government, and directly leads both to schism and heresy. If we were to follow your advice, we should establish a ministry, not of spiritual life, but of death: like that which is set up by those hireling apostates, the French Constitutional clergy. The administration, in this case, of some of our sacraments and rites would be invalid, the administration of them all would be sacrilegious.—But let us hear upon what ground you propose this alarming measure to us.—We may, you tell us, “vindicate to ourselves the canonical rights of parochial clergy.” What
may

may we all of us (for every one, I presume, has the same right) commence rectors or parish priests at once? This would be like raising an army all of officers, without so much as a private amongst them. Where is even the national church in which all the clergy enjoy parochial rights and ordinary jurisdiction? Besides where are the parishes, for each of these rectors to govern? But it seems we are to create these parishes, as likewise the bishoprics, by our own authority, in the same manner as we are to bestow upon ourselves ordinary jurisdiction! But I am here chiefly exposing your ignorance of the canon law: let me then return to my subject.

The Church not pure: the necessity of reforming her.

11. " In the course of seventeen centuries, if she (the Catholic Church) has contracted *habits that might be reformed*, what else could be expected? *

* *Reflect. to Hawkins, p. 23.*

This has been the pretence of every dogmatizing innovator and arch-heretic, for disturbing the peace of the church, during the aforesaid seventeen centuries. It is however a clear impeachment of the inerrancy and sanctity of the Church, which are secured by the promises of Christ; as such your proposition, I am convinced, is, at least, erroneous and productive of schism. Many individuals indeed contract bad habits which call for reformation; the worst of which is the diabolical presumption of attempting to reform the spotless spouse of Jesus Christ, his holy Church, which does ever, and ever must *teach the way of God in truth*, both as to belief and practice.

12. "All churches are intolerant and
"as such uncharitable*."

This passage you particularly apply to the true church, which indeed alone has a just title to the appellation of Church. Now if she be uncharitable, I pray how is

* *Ibid.* p. 30.

the holy ? You have even gone a step further in a passage quoted above, and have maintained, that without charity it is impossible to be christian*. The doctrine here laid down is highly scandalous, erroneous and impious. It is true the Church, according to her well-known maxim, neither admits error, nor permits it: but this very spirit proves her charity in both its branches: whereas the latitudinarianism, which you every where insinuate is sovereignly injurious to the God of truth and destructive of the souls of men.

This, Sir, is a mere specimen of the erroneous, schismatical and irreligious doctrines, which pervade your numerous publications, either openly expressed or still more fatally insinuated, in equivocal or sarcastic expressions. Indeed, since you have found that there are writers, who are both able and willing to detect and denounce your dangerous errors to the public and to your proper superiors, there is nothing you

* *Memoirs*. Pref. p. xxvii.

study so much, in your compositions, as the artifice of equivocation, so as to instill your poison into the minds of your readers, and, at the same time to secure a retreat for yourself, in case you are called to an account for the same. The same artifice his present Holiness charges those modern innovators of Tuscany with, in the condemnation which he has lately published of their errors*.

What is there, Sir, that is dear or sacred in the eyes of your mother church, which has not, at times been the subject of your censure or derision? We have seen a specimen of your mode of treating her faith and government, with respect both to her supreme head and her inferior pastors: what now do you say of her discipline in general? That "the discipline of the

* "Norant illi versutam Novatorum fallendi artem; qui Catholicarum aurium offensionem veritatis, captionum suarum laqueos persape student subdolis
"verborum involucris obtegere, ut inter discrimina
"sensuum, latens error lenius influat in animos. St. Leo,
"ep. 129, &c" *Damnat. Pistoj.* p. 5.

" church

" church has greatly departed from primi-
 " tive simplicity*: that the warm imagi-
 " nations of some nations, and the mate-
 " rial conceptions of others have intro-
 " duced into European practice a cum-
 " brous weight of ceremonies and un-
 " meaning pageantry†: That " super-
 " stition was the animating principle which
 " planned and executed our ancient chur-
 " ches and monasteries, . . . in as much as
 " a nation of philosophers or cool christi-
 " ans would have erected no magnificent
 " churches or breathing statues‡: that
 the " niching of mawmets (or the placing
 " of images) in churches, and the hanging
 " of eyes, legs and arms round altars &c. §
 " are

* *Reflect. to Hawkins, p. 19.*

† *Ibid. p. 20.*

‡ *History of Henry II. pages 15, 19.*

§ I cannot omit observing that this pious practice
 of persons who had been miraculously cured by the in-
 tercession of certain saints, obtained in the ancient
 church no less than it does at present. " In the tem-
 " ples of our Martyrs some offer the figures of eyes,

“ are follies unworthy the service of our
 “ Maker :” that a veneration for relicks
 “ is a proof of superstition*,” and such as
 deserves to be “ lamented by every good
 “ man† :” that the devotion of the church
 to the instruments of our Saviour’s passion
 (the cross, the spear, the nails, the crown
 of thorns) is a *new devotion*, which is also
 insinuated to be an *inhuman* affection of the
 mind‡ : that the whole collection of mira-
 cles recorded by the holy fathers and ec-
 clestiaſtical writers, and those daily proved
 by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in
 the canonization of saints are a series of
 imposture, on one part, and of credulity
 on the other§. Our holy fathers are re-
 presented

“ some of hands, some of feet, made of gold or silver.
 “ . . . These are evident proofs of the cure of as
 “ many disorders, &c.” Theodoret, *Serm.* 8, *de Mar-*
tyribus.—Reflect. to Hawk. p. 74.

* Exam. p. 9. † *Hist. of Abeil.* p. 19.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 39.

§ Vide supra. I must add here, that our author
 makes it a problem, whether it were not “ better to
 “ abolish

presented as being destitute of morality*, our most illustrious martyrs as having died in a wrong cause†. The state of a religious life is scoffed at, as “an attempt to surpass the perfection of our blessed Saviour’s life”, the duties of which are said to be supported by enthusiasm rather than divine grace‡. Finally religion itself is described as changing with the changing

“abolish the celibacy of the clergy” *Hawkins*; p. 8. and peremptorily decides that it is a *foible* in the Latin Church to preserve the use of the Latin tongue, in her liturgy: which he says originates in no better motive than a hatred to Luther, Calvin, Queen Elizabeth, & to other insolent protestants. *ibid.* p. 74. He tauntingly tells our Bishops, that more danger is to be apprehended to religion, from the devotion of the Scapulary and of the Sacred Heart of the blessed Virgin, than from what he terms the “*innocent Theory*” that was proposed to us, of rushing into schism, which latter the Bishops had censured in their Pastoral. *Memoirs*, p. xxxii.

* See all the accusations of immorality, defamation, violence, inhumanity, uncharitableness, dishonour, &c. brought against St. Bernard for his detection of Abelard. p. 278, &c.

† *Hist. of Hen. 2.* p. 240.

‡ *Ibid.* pages 48. 193.

times.

times. It was hardly understood in the
 “ twilight of the twelfth century* :” it was
 “ overclouded with ignorance, superstition,
 “ bigotry and enthusiasm, through that series
 “ of years when the appearance of miracu-
 “ lous events was thought to be most fre-
 “ quent† :” but now since miracles are said
 to have ceased, “ the clouds of ignorance are
 “ dispersed, and religion has been purified
 “ from the base allay of human opinions‡,”
 and “ an auspicious day surrounds us§.”
 There is nothing however, Sir, as is easily
 conceived, that so much rouses your indig-
 nation as the intolerance of those, who en-
 deavour to prevent *the faith once delivered*
 from being mixed with the fond conceits
 of philosophic innovators, who fail not to
 sprout up, a plentiful harvest, in every age
 of the church. Hence you censure “ the
 “ forwardness of zeal and the holy fire of
 “ churchmen, who arrogantly erect a tri-
 “ bunal and call their equals before it, as

* *Ibid*, p. 73. p. 391.

† p. 185.

‡ *Ibid*.

§ p. 391.

“an unauthorized attempt to represent the
 “person of the Deity and to vindicate his
 “rights.” Whereas “the holy Founder
 “of the christian system, therefore expres-
 “sed certain doctrines in ambiguous or
 “mysterious language, that when men dif-
 “fered from one another they might find
 “indulgence *.”

On the other hand, if there is a person
 or object, which the church views with pe-
 culiar horror and detestation, the same is
 sure to be the subject, in one shape or ano-
 ther, of your approbation. Hence those
 seditious and immoral, as well as impious
 heretics, an Arnold of Brescia, a Tanchelm,
 and even the filthy and rebellious Albigen-
 ses, in you find an advocate †, the latter of
 whom, though they died with arms in their
 hands, fighting for their abominations, you
 represent ‡ as martyrs. But it is chiefly
 that dangerous innovator, Abelard, because
 in him you seem to recognize a similarity

* Ibid. p. 157.

† Ibid. passim.

‡ History of Henry 2, p 522.

of character and history (*O may your latter end be like to his!*) who is the subject of your admiration and applause. His cause was canonically judged in two provincial councils, which pronounced his doctrine to be heretical, and ordered his writings to be burnt. This sentence was confirmed by the sovereign Pontiff, and has been received and venerated by the universal church during the intervening space of six centuries;—when behold! now stands up a novel-writer*, one Joseph Berington, who has the confidence to proclaim that “Abelard, “in truth was not guilty of a single error†!” And this very man is angry, if we do not acknowledge him to be a Catholic!

* Mr. Berington has at last found his true level, having furnished the circulating libraries with the affecting story of Emily Algotti, or some such name, for I have not read the novel. But, to speak the truth, his quarto volumes are rather to be termed romances than histories, both for matter and manner. If any one is desirous of satisfying himself on this head, I would refer him to this writer’s account of the signing of Magna Charta, *Hist of Hen. 2.* p. 510.

† *Hist. of Abel.* p. 278.

The

The errors of Abelard, however, are now of no other consequence, except as far as the credit of the church is concerned in having condemned them, for they have no partizans. There is however another heresy, more dangerous, because more hypocritical and concealed, against which the church thinks she cannot use too many precautions. The last of these has been to require a general subscription to the Bull *Unigenitus*, in condemnation of the late head of that party, Paschasius Quesnel. What, Sir, are your sentiments with regard to this fatal heresy? You tell us "the history of this controversy is the history of "the *Egaremens de l'esprit humain*, that a "Janсениst was every thing by turns," (in short a phantom) and that Quesnel himself was "an honest Janсениst who died anathematized by Rome and persecuted, for "the excrescences of a wild imagination, "by Kings, Priests and Jesuits *!"—In
the

* *Memoirs*, p. 443. I must add he laughs at the idea of having admitted one of the propositions condemned

the same spirit, as it should seem of opposition to the church, you every-where speak with rapture, of that late dreadful revolution on the continent, which has proved the greatest calamity she has experienced since her foundation, both in your private conversation, as I am assured, amongst your disciples, and in your publications *. It is true you, in one place, censure the deliberate barbarity with which the clergy, and other persons of both sexes have been treated "in a cause which otherwise was great and "noble," and you pronounce that "no "success will efface this infamy, till ample "reparation be made to innocence, and to "virtue, and to justice, and to manhood†." But it seems there is no restitution to be made to religion! Amidst the laboured obscurity which pervades the whole paragraph, thus much however is plain, that the con-

demned in that Bull. *Ibid.* And yet Mr. Berington himself has solemnly sworn to that Bull.

* See the dedication of *the History of Henry 2.* to Mr. Fox, p. 3. *Memoirs*, p. 16.

† Mem. p. 16.

duft

duct of those confessors of the faith and ornaments of the sacerdotal character, the French emigrant clergy, who refused obedience to the democratic reformers of their religion and government, is compared, or rather contrasted with that of the mercenary part of our clergy, "who bowed their heads, and submitted to the laws," (which abolished the catholic religion in the reign of Queen Elizabeth) as to what "was now become," as you tell us, "a christian duty." — If this, Sir, is your language, concerning the fatal apostacy of France and the conduct of her faithful clergy, when you speak under a certain restraint, by giving your name to the public, we may easily conjecture what lengths you are capable of going, when you are under no restraint at all, in an anonymous work, such as the *Considerations addressed to the French Bishops and clergy now resident in England*, which, though ascribed, by public report, to different authors, has never been considered by those, who are intimately acquainted with Mr. Berington's peculiarities of thought,

* *Mem.* p. 16.

and of language, as the work of any other, but of him. Thus much is certain, and I will engage, if necessary to prove it, that almost the whole system of jansenistical error and schism, which the author of that singular work recommends to these constant confessors, upon their return to their native country, (who indeed were only banished out of it for refusing to comply with a great part of it) may be extracted from this gentleman's avowed publications. The chief thing that strikes us as absolutely new, in the work under consideration, is the twofold plan of it. The writer undertakes to prove that the infidelity which heretofore prevailed in France, was owing to the intolerance of the clergy, in not making any allowance for heterodoxy and impiety; and that the immorality which reigned there, is to be ascribed to the strict discipline which they enjoined, with respect to confession, fasting, and the church laws in general!

But it is time, Sir, to observe the language and conduct you have held with respect to the *State and Behaviour* of the body, to which

which you still affect to belong, *the Catholics of England*. Some years ago, you wrote a work, under this very title. You had not then made *the progress* (in irreligion) which you now boast of*. Still the pamphlet was characterized by many of your favorite errors. The main object however seems to have been, to hold up the body at large, and every individual part of it, to the contempt of the British nation†. For this purpose you declare the catholic college where you received your education to be an *Augéan stable*‡, the priests from which (yourself of course excepted) are “ill provided with learning, very superficially acquainted with the Latin and Greek authors, and totally destitute of all other science; they are austere in their princi-

* *Memoirs*, Pref. p. xxx.

† “If Catholics be not pleased: they may know that I did not write with views of pleasing them. I aimed to inform, and, if possible, to correct. Lords, priests and commons now have, and always have had something in their characters and manners which is reprehensible.” Pref. p. v.

‡ *State and Behaviour*, p. 173.

"ples, confined in their ideas, ignorant
 "of the world, and unpleasant in their
 "manners *." The other bodies are each
 brought in for the purpose of abuse. One
 of them has no other object than to instruct
 youth in the fashionable arts of polished life,
 another is only distinguished by the stoutness
 of their lungs †, a third obtains "the earthly
 "substance of families by promising a
 "place in paradise, which, it is discovered,
 "they cannot dispose of to their benefac-
 "tors §." Our religious ladies are seri-
 ously pronounced to be "ill-adapted to
 "the business of education, and are, on
 "the other hand, sarcastically described
 "as proper to receive missionary powers,"
 inasmuch as "their preaching would make
 "more profelytes than a legion of friars ||."
 Nor are our lay-gentlemen more respected.
 "Their natural and acquired abilities" are
 said to be "below the common level ¶;"
 nature

* Ibid. p. 174. † P. 176. ‡ Ibid.

§ P. 177. || Pp. 180, 182.

¶ P. 128. See also p. 133. where it is said that
 "Nature has been too thrifty in her gifts" to them.

But

nature having thrown to their wives the elements which belonged to them*; they are proud, ignorant and imperious†. In a later work than that which I have cited, you discover that, the foundation of our colleges abroad was the bane of our religion, as "in them machinations, some real " some fictitious were incessantly practised, " at it was rumoured, against the queen " and the religion of the state ‡:" that our martyred predecessors, the first missionary priests, " were not exposed to prosecution for any tenet of catholic faith, " but because they had returned, under " the positive inhibition of the law, to disturb the established faith of this country, and to bring it again under the con-

But for their consolation they are told, that " lead and " iron are sometimes preferred to more splendid metals. *Ibid.*

* P. 181.

† P. 163.

‡ Mr. Berington's studied caution has here betrayed him into more complicated absurdity, than I ever met with before in a single sentence. *Memoirs*, p. 53.

"trouling jurisdiction of the Roman Bishop*."

I tread lightly over the yet smouldering embers of our late unhappy dissensions, but if, Sir, the chief guilt of them must rest with those who were industrious in misleading their brethren, how deeply involved are you! You began by taking advantage of your own bishop's absence from his district, in consequence of the recent death of his brother, to collect subscriptions from the neighbouring clergy, in order to support that symbol of schism and error, the late proscribed oath, which has not only been condemned by all the catholic bishops in the three kingdoms, with the sovereign Pontiff at their head, but which even the enlightened and liberal leader of the protestant bench of bishops declared in his place in parliament he himself could not conscientiously subscribe to†. I was present, Sir,

* *Ibid.* p. 5.

† See the *Speech of Dr. Horsley, Bishop of St. David's, now of Rochester*, p. 9.—J. P. Coghlan.

when the first copy of your printed paper, with the subscriptions to it, was delivered from the post to the aforesaid prelate, and heard from his own lips the most formal disapprobation of the measure in question. Since that period, and even since the rejection of the oath by parliament, you have more than once openly presumed to stigmatize that condemnation of the oath (for which our bishops have received the congratulations of whatever is respectable and dignified in the church at present, and for which they will receive her benedictions for ages to come) not only as *an imprudent* but also as *an intemperate act* *. But, to be brief, your new creed, which you palmed upon honest, unsuspecting men, as an orthodox test for "distinguishing "what is human from what is divine †," has not only been demonstrated by our theologians, but has also been declared by our prelates ‡, in the very first article of it,

* *Memoirs*, p. 434.

† *Appeal to the Catholics of England*, p. 21.

‡ August 24th, 1792.

except

except one, to be erroneous, and leading to heresy*. Your system of canon law is yet more faulty than that of your theology, being partly borrowed from the Conciliabulum of Pistoja, partly framed, to answer a present occasion, from your own fertile imagination. With Ricci and his associates you condemn all *suspensiones ex informatâ conscientiâ* †. You purposely confound the censure of suspension, with a

*. “We know, as others do, what our faith is, and
 “ in that knowledge we have learned to distinguish
 “ what is human from what is divine.—Of this church
 “ we believe the Bishop of Rome to be the head, supreme in spirituals by divine appointment, *supreme in discipline by ecclesiastical institution.*” *Appeal to Catholics of England*, p. 22.

† *Address to Catholic Clergy*, pp. 20, 21, &c.

Vide *Damnatio quam plurimum Propos. a S. D. Pis VI. 1794. Propos. 49.* “*Quæ damnata ut nullas & invalidas suspensiones ex informatâ conscientiâ.*—Falsa, perniciofa, in Trid. injuriosa.”

Propos. 50. “Item in eo quod insinuat soli episcopo fas non esse uti potestati, quam tamen ei desert Tridentinum, Sess. 14. c. 1. de Ref. suspensionis ex informatâ conscientiâ legitime infligendæ—Jurisdictionis prælatorum ætiva.”

mere

mere withdrawing of the faculties*. For the worst of purposes you totally misrepresent to the public the nature of a canonical appeal†. And not content with irregular-

you

* *Address*, p. 11, &c. After having tried his utmost skill to maintain this illusion, by falsely and *schismatically*, teaching that our missionaries are possessed of ordinary jurisdiction, and that our bishops are not competent to withdraw the usual faculties from them, our canonist is obliged, in the end, to appeal from the *letter* to the *spirit* of the law; p. 447; which, in fact, is leaving the justice of a canonical censure to the decision of each individual on whom it may be inflicted.

† For the purpose of representing our venerable prelate, as an arbitrary despot, who refuses to pay any regard to "an appeal in actual force," *Panzani*, p. 443. and who even denies the principle of appeal, *Address*, p. 14. he represents the *Protest* at the end of the second Blue Book, as being a regular appeal, which tied up the hands of our bishops from every act of jurisdiction over their respective flocks, that directly or indirectly related to the condemned oath. *Panzani*, p. 443. But the western clergy in answer to the above quoted address and a printed paper, entitled *Audi alteram partem*, invincibly prove that no one condition, requisite to constitute the canonical process in question, was observed on the aforesaid occasion, or on any other

latly and scandalously deciding and publishing to the world, that our venerable senior bishop has inflicted, what you term, a *suspension*, that is "unjust, illegal and null," you schismatically hold him out as a person, who is himself suspended from the services of the church, in consequence of the same*.

On other occasion, when an appeal from the bishops was talked of. Indeed Mr. Berington is, in the end, obliged to give up this point also, by referring to the censured party himself for that account of the formalities, necessary for an appeal, complied with by him, which he owns himself incapable of giving.

* The above quoted publications have victoriously refuted these indecent and seditious charges, and proved that the conduct of the senior prelate was strictly conformable both to the letter and the spirit of our ecclesiastical code. With respect to the alarming and schismatical doctrine advanced in the Address, that the said prelate (in the full discharge of his episcopal functions) is himself a suspended man, the reverend canonist endeavours now to manage a retreat for himself, by misquoting his own words. In the Address he says: "The judge that shall violate any of these conditions is himself *ipso facto* suspended from the services and offices of the church." pp. 11, 12. In Panzani, referring to this passage he thus expresses himself: "We observed

On the above-mentioned occasion you exerted your utmost, though impotent endeavours, to form the whole catholic priesthood into a democratical convention, for vindicating, what you call, our christian liberty, against the aforesaid venerable prelate *. Since that attempt, for the purpose of fishing in troubled waters, you have laboured at one and the same time to revive the ancient jealousies between the secular and regular missionaries †, to engage the capitulars to set up a claim of actual ordina-

"observed that the judge who should violate the formalities to be observed in the infliction of censures, is himself ipso facto TO BE suspended from the services and offices of the church." p. 448. The ordinary reader will remark the interpolation, but the learned reader, who perceives the fraudulent end, which it is intended to answer, will smile at the clumsiness of it, as it confounds together the *sententia lata* and the *sententia ferenda*.—To speak of a suspension for any actual fault, which is TO BE inflicted IPSO FACTO is just as rational as to pass sentence of death upon a dead man.

* See the above Address, p. 22, &c.

† Memoirs, passim.

ry powers, in opposition to the jurisdiction of our apostolic vicars*, and to goad on the whole ecclesiastical body to attempt a revolution in our church government, and at once to tear themselves from the centre of union†.

I trust that this combined assault on the sacred fortress will not be more successful than the impotent attack above-mentioned. But there is one side, on which, as I have always, for obvious reasons, dreaded your malice‡, so I fear that you have made a considerable impression. At the time that our eighth Henry, in revenge for the Pope's refusing to dissolve the sacred bond of matrimony, in compliment to his unbridled lust, was resolved to root out of this kingdom every fibre of his spiritual authority, he caused an oath to be enacted for this purpose, the most expressive and energetical that the human imagination could devise,

* *Ibid.* p. 391.

† *Ibid.* p. 466, &c.

‡ See *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, p. 80. *Ecclesiastical Democracy Detected*, p. 159.

requiring

requiring it to be taken by all his subjects. This oath has been viewed, in the same light ever since, as a test and barrier of protestancy against catholicism, by government and the nation at large, no less than by our own body, especially by our ecclesiastical superiors, who have ever anathematized it, and by our numerous martyrs, who have refused the same, when offered to them, with their lives, under the fatal gibbet. Such are the opinions of all parties at the present day. What however is most to the purpose, our orthodox prelates, on every occasion, continue to condemn the oath of supremacy, as absolutely unlawful to be taken by a Catholic. But what is the doctrine of past times to Mr. Berington, who rejects the concurring testimony of all the holy fathers for the continuance of miracles? And of what weight are the injunctions of our modern apostolical vicars with him, who represents them as having no authority, but what they derive from the tameness of an acquiescing clergy? He stands forward, and, in defiance both of

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authority and decency, reproaches the body, in general, with a narrowness of mind and a dullness of comprehension, in not having followed the example of his predecessor at Oiscot, in the reign of King Charles II. who, to save his life, swore to the Regal supremacy *, and emphatically calls for some "one bold man, amongst them, who by taking the oath (in question) may dissipate the whole charm of prejudice, and restore us to the most valuable right of British citizens †." This call upon the laity we have reason to lament, has, during the course of the last summer, proved more effectual, than another, mentioned above, did upon the clergy. Not that I ascribe the whole scandal and disgrace that has taken place in a certain northern congregation to the weight of Mr. Berington's reasoning and authority; but when the mind is strongly tempted, it seizes even on a slight pretext to justify its frailty. Thank God however the irre-

* *Memoirs*, p. 324.

† *Ibid.* p. 11.

religious phrenzy is now abated, and the church has received that hard but necessary reparation of an open retraction for the scandal given, from the greater part of those who had been seduced.

It is difficult, Sir, to eradicate early impressions whether good or bad. We are indebted to this, under the mercy of that gracious Being, who watches over his church, for the scene of edification I have just mentioned. You are also sensible how necessary it is to sow in the infant mind the seeds of philosophic toleration, which you represent as less common amongst Catholics than amongst sectaries *, and to begin, even from the cradle, the work of rooting out those congenial habits of ignorance, bigotry, superstition and enthusiasm, the extirpation of which seems to be the whole business of your life. With this view you have written a book † to recommend “the opening of schools for religi-

* *Reflect. to Hawkins*, p. 30.

† *An Essay on Sunday Schools.*

"ous and moral improvement upon a more
 "extensive plan" than has hitherto been
 thought of by any other man; schools
 which shall equally suit "Church of Eng-
 "land men, Presbyterians, Baptists, Roman
 "Catholics or Quakers*." For the use
 of these, you offer yourself to "the easy
 "task of compiling the books or catechisms
 "which must be elementary and compre-
 "hensive, separating from each society its
 "distinctive opinions †." These, of course,
 are to supersede the use of our Catholic
 Catechism, which you pronounce to be
 "incoherent and undefined," calculated to
 produce a "confusion of ideas in specula-
 "tive and practical, in mystery and in moral
 "truths, and (even) instability of belief;"
 inasmuch as "in the first page of it, the
 "child is taught that *his soul is like to God,*
 "*because it is a spirit, endowed with under-*
 "*standing and free-will, and is immortal ‡.*"
 I do not deny, Sir, that in this new com-
 prehensive system of religious and moral

* *Ibid.* p. 27.

† *Ibid.*

‡ P. 34.

education, you allow the child to go to Mass *, though you strongly dissuade the parent from "the partial and precipitate" measure of teaching him what the Mass is †. Let us now, Sir, before we take leave of each other, by way of experiment, compare together the doctrine of our old incoherent Catechism with that of your new luminous elementary Catechism, as we gather the same from your own works, upon a few leading points, and let us compare them with a view, not only to their respective orthodoxy, but also to the *distinctness* of ideas and the *stability of belief* which they are calculated to produce, as this is a point that you particularly insist on.

* *Ibid.* p. 26.

† P. 29. N. B. Mr. Berington however is not entitled to the *whole* merit of this new system of religious education. The hint of it is evidently taken from the *Emile* of J. J. Rousseau.

1. Question: "Why did God make you?"

The old Catholic Catechism. Mr. Berington's new improved Catechism.

Answer. "That I might know him, love him and serve him in this world, and be happy with him for ever in the next *."

2. Q. "In what is your soul like to God?"

A. "Because, my soul is a spirit endowed with understanding and free will, and is immortal, that is to say can never die."

A. "The God that made me, has given me something which perhaps he has not given to the ox or the elephant, and this man calls reason †."

* First Catechism.
† History of Abeil. p. 348.
‡ Reflections to Hawkins, p. 33.

3. Q.

3. Q. "In what does the faith and law
" of Christ chiefly consist ?

A. "In two prin-
" cipal mysteries,
" namely the Unity
" & Trinity of God,
" and the Incarna-
" tion and death of
" our Saviour *."

A. "The doctrines
" of the Trinity re-
" gard not the im-
" portant worship of
" our Maker, nor
" the great interests
" of religion †."

4. Q. "Why may not a man be *saved* in
" any church or religion ?"

A. "Because there
" is but *one God*, *one*
" *faith and one bap-*
" *tism*, Ephes. iv. 5.
" For God alone be-
" ing the author of
" true religion can-
" not reveal many
" without contradic-
" ting

A. "Abeillard
" dares to give the
" Pagan Philoso-
" phers a seat of
" happiness in those
" regions, to which
" some Christians, in
" too vain a partia-
" lity pretend an ex-
" clusive

* *Second Catechism*.

† *History of Abeil.* p. 156.

“ting himself, which “clusive right”
 “cannot be advan-
 “ced without blas-
 “phemy.”

5. Q. “Why cannot the Church err in
 “matters of faith?”

A. “Because Christ
 “has promised that
 “hell’s gates shall
 “not prevail against
 “his church, and
 “that the Holy
 “Ghost shall teach
 “her all truths, and
 “that he himself
 “will abide with her
 “for ever.”

A. “What extra-
 “ordinary co-ope-
 “ration of the Holy
 “Ghost is required
 “that men, habitu-
 “ated to the con-
 “cerns of religion,
 “should be able to de-
 “clare what doctrine
 “they were taught,
 “and what they then
 “believe? And this
 “is that wondrous
 “*infallibility* about
 “which reams of
 “paper have been
 “written †.”

* *Hist. of Abel.* p. 131.

† *Reflec. to Hawk.* p. 68.

6. Q. "Is it possible to keep all the commandments of God?"

A. "Yes, it is by God's grace. Zachary and Elizabeth were both just before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord without reproof. S. "Luke i. 6."

A. "If I am too animated," (or rather too presumptuous and too irreligious) "it is not my fault. I write as I feel; and the regulating of the state of my nerves is not at my own option*."

My subject has exhausted me, but I have not exhausted it. I must draw towards a conclusion. But first permit me, Sir, in the style of serious expostulation, to ask you the following questions: Is not the portrait that I have exhibited of the doctrine and behaviour of the gentleman in question a true delineation? I have produced my authorities, which I am ready to

* *State and Behaviour*, Pref. p. iv.

confirm,

confirm, for every single trait of which it is composed, except for his being the author of the schismatical pamphlet addressed to the French Clergy, which charge I own rests only upon strong probabilities: hence I pledge myself to withdraw it, upon sufficient proof to the contrary, as to the fact and as to doctrine. In the second place, I ask, whether it is not an insult, passing all bounds, that Catholics, who sacrifice every worldly consideration in order to preserve their religion inviolate, should see the same frittered away before their faces to absolute latitudinarianism, and misrepresented to a Protestant public, by one who will persist in calling himself their brother? I ask, in the third place, whether it is for the credit of the person in question here, or for his welfare hereafter to continue wearing the visor, and to profess himself the member of a religion, the very characteristic of which is submission of private judgment to established authority, whilst, on every occasion, he is found inverting that rule, and instead of submit-

ting

ting his own opinions to the doctrine of the church, endeavouring to bring down the doctrine of the church to the level of his opinions?

After having witnessed the religious paradoxes which I have extracted from your writings, particularly where you pronounce that Abelard, convicted by two councils and the reigning Pontiff, of heresy, “ was not “ guilty of a single error, ’ it will not appear very extraordinary if you should still attempt to stand upon your orthodoxy; but that there should be found other men, and those men of name, who ought to know better, who, with your works open before them, declare of the same, in the self-same terms that you have applied to the writings of the said innovator; “ in his works may be “ found uncommon language and some extraordinary opinions; heterodoxy there “ is none;” this, I say, is inconceivable. Let however those persons who mutter such assertions in private; which they neither can defend nor even dare assert in public, let them, if they will neither attend to evidence,

dence, nor to the indignant voice of the body at large, proclaiming Mr. Berington to be the dead weight of their cause, listen at least to the declarations of men of a different persuasion, whose profession and whose talents entitle them to judge of literary performances, and who certainly are not biassed by "overweening zeal" for the purity of Catholic faith.—Ah! Mr. Berington, it is not for nothing that your credit for *liberality, candour, good sense*, and I know not what, stands so high with Protestant Reviewers and other such writers; you have bartered the dearest interest of the religion, to which you were supposed to belong, for their applause. I shall content myself at present with bringing forward two quotations, from the writings in question, upon one of the most material errors charged against you above, in proof that the ideas of Protestants agree with those of Catholics concerning the same.

" If our Saviour could say to the scribe,
 " who made a good confession of faith:
 " *thou art not far from the kingdom of God:*
 " Mr.

" Mr. Berington's views of and observations on the Roman See warrant us in saying: *Thou art not far from Protestantism*.*"

" A Roman Catholic priest who, like Mr. Berington, is of opinion that every pastor, by the divine established order of Christ, is possessed of a proper and essential jurisdiction, wholly uncontrollable by and independent of the See of Rome, must never expect to be at peace, till he has followed the Apostolic precept: *Come out from amongst them, and be separate†.*"

There is indeed one apparent argument in your favour, which I must notice, because it has been publicly brought forward, though in a different form; I mean by way of reproach to Catholics, not, Sir, of justifying you. It has been said; if it be true that *there are schisms amongst you;*

* Review of Books in the European Magazine for June 1794. p. 445.

† Monthly Review from December 1794. p. 474.

men professing and publishing different doctrines, on the leading points of faith, what becomes of your boasted unity, and of your living tribunal for eradicating every rising error? I answer you and those, who have proposed this objection, at the same time. It is true that our Church not only teaches one and the same doctrine, in all places and at all times, but also that she does not suffer or connive at error. *Ecclesia Dei errores nec facit nec tacet*, is her standing maxim, borrowed from one of the ancient Fathers*. She has real and efficient means for crushing every dangerous novelty that regards her faith, her discipline or her government. But this is to be understood in, what is termed, a moral sense. The Prelates of our church, who are charged, in the first instance, with this important duty, each one in his respective flock, are not always immediately apprized of the rise or even progress of dangerous novelties. Their time, in general, is too usefully occupied to permit them to look into such flimsy romantic histories of literary lo-

* Vide etiam *Damnat. Pissoj. Syn.* p. 7. lin. 33, &c.
Typis J. P. Coghlan.

vers*, or into such wild and brainfick projects of reforming the world, by sending children to a Latitudinarian school, every Sunday, as the present superficial age teems with. In the next place, when they are made acquainted with *the profane and vain babblings of the ungodly, whose speech spreadeth like a canker.* 2 Tim. 2. 17., it becomes an important consideration, in what manner these may be most effectually suppressed, and that with the least mischief possible. But I answer, secondly, to the aforesaid objection, and I answer it, Sir, in your hearing, that every Catholic Bishop, who has had any concern with Mr. Berington has openly testified, in some shape or another, his disapprobation of his doctrines and conduct; and has acted, with more or less vigour, in endeavours to restrain them. To prevent any mistake, I will enumerate the prelates of whom I speak, though I shall not, at present, specify the means they severally employed: The R. R. Conziè Bishop of Arras, the R. R. Richard Chaloner and James Talbot V. V. A. A. of the

* Hist. of Abel. and Heloise, c. g.

London District, the R. R. Mat. Gibson V. A. of the Northern District, the R. R. Tho. Talbot, V. A. of the Middle District*, and our present three orthodox bishops, who, in a regular synod, censured certain of his positions. I do not deny indeed that you have at length found a prelate to afford you a certain degree of countenance and support. But, I publish no secret in mentioning, that he himself is in a singular and unprecedented situation in consequence of

* The only doubt that is likely to occur on this subject, is concerning the late R. R. Thomas Talbot: as Mr. Berington expressly declares that he is not "involved in the general censure" which he passes on the arbitrary conduct, disregard of the rights of the priesthood, pageantry, &c. of the other V. V. A. A. *Memoirs*, p. 468.—To this I reply that the Prelate in question testified to me and to the Rev. Gentleman, who had just then denounced Mr. Berington's errors to him, how much he disapproved of the same, and of his conduct in general, but he excused himself from proceeding to censure them on the very same grounds on which he had formerly excused himself, when called upon by the R. R. Mat. Gibson, namely, that he was "afraid" to use his own words. "of making Mr. Berington worse."

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his erroneous doctrines, and that the inflexible orthodoxy of the church, requires at his hands an ample and public retraction of the same.

I am now, Sir, about to take my leave of you, and, to speak with frankness, I believe, by this time, we are mutually tired of each other's company, I must however, at parting, add one or two words more. Do not, Sir, affect, as you did on a former occasion, an ignorance of the doctrinal charges here brought against you, under pretence that you have not read the present work. If you do, be assured, not a soul will believe you. If then you honour me with an answer, I have one earnest request to make, which I should not presume to offer, if your own credit and also peace of mind, by shortening the present controversy, were not equally concerned, with the satisfaction of the public and my own. It is this: Be candid and open. Lay aside all studied dis-

+ See Preface to *Memoirs*, p. xxxiv. with respect to the *Remarks on his writings* by Mr. Plowden.

guise and equivoque in the exposition of your doctrine. I will add that *manliness* requires it, which appears, in your scale, to be the first of moral and even of prelatic virtues. Observe, I am not deprecating your wrath; I know what I have to expect for this attempt to tear off your vizor. I will readily compound for ten more pages of invective against myself, in quality of a modern Pharisee, and for a dissertation, as long as ever you please, upon the old topic of *ignorance, bigotry, superstition and enthusiasm*, I will not even reply to you, if only, when you have exhausted this subject, and when you enter upon your own defence, you will act a plain, open and consistent part. This, in my opinion, implies an option of one of the three following proposals.

If you are conscious of your errors, candidly own them to the public, at large, which has been accustomed to the perusal of your writings; tell them that you have been in the habit, for near these twenty years past, through a desire of diminishing
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the vulgar prejudice, or through any other motive you may please to assign, of occasionally misrepresenting the Catholic doctrine, in essential articles, and point out the errors in particular, in order to undeceive Protestants, and to repair the scandal and other bad effects, as much as in you lies, which these have certainly produced in the Catholic body. How much more noble is it to retract an error, than never to have fallen into one! Is not Mr. Berington's mind magnanimous enough to feel this?

In case however you stand upon your orthodoxy, testify at least, that you submit your doctrine in general, and the decision of the above charges, in particular, to the church in her regular tribunals, the first of which is that of your own Bishop, or if the business should be of sufficient importance, as happened in the case of Abelard, to that of the Provincial Bishops. Do that, and we are still brethren. I on my part will gladly retract every charge that I have exhibited against you, which they shall pronounce,

nounce, after a full hearing, not to be founded.

But if, Sir, you will neither disavow your errors, nor submit the decision of them to the regular tribunals of the church; if you will persist in dogmatizing, and will be judged by no one but yourself, there remains but one choice for a gentleman and an honest man to make: Avow that you are no longer a member of the Catholic Church, hoist your own standard, and frame any creed you please. Even in this case, our controversy is at an end, as all that I aim at is to make you consistent with yourself. How much more honorable and even moral, was the conduct of an Antonio de Dominis and even of an Archibald Bower (with all his impostures in other respects*)

* This unhappy apostate was long protected and encouraged by the late Lord Littleton and other distinguished personages, as a valuable acquisition to the Protestant cause. At length the present Bishop of Salisbury proved to the public, what Catholics knew and had demonstrated long before, that he was, in every respect made up of fraud and imposture. From this circumstance his Lordship of Sarum acquired the name of Detector.

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who openly abandoned the Catholic communion, than that of their respective countrymen, a Fra Paolo Sarpi and a Peter Walsli, both of whom, I have proved, from their own confession, to have continued in the same, with heterodox opinions, for the purpose of treachery, in order to serve the cause of its enemies†. Once more consider, I pray you Sir, in case you are disposed to insult the common Father of the faithful, in his accumulated distress, whose bread you eat for so many years, and to publish five volumes, in quarto on the *Rise, Progress and Decline of the Papal Power*, in conformity with the prospectus which you have given us, whether it will not be more both for your profit and your credit, to write the same in the character of a Protestant, as your predecessor A. Bower did*,

* See *Ecclesiastical Democracy Detected*. p. 237. *Divine Right*.

† *History of the Popes*. This performance also of A. B., of which the greatest expectations had been raised, was in the end found to be a mere *money-getting business*, and afterwards fell into contempt and oblivion.

of whose labours no doubt you will make due advantage, than in that of a Catholic.

Do I then wish to drive you to such extremities? God knows the contrary. At the same time, I must confess, I had rather see you openly abandon a system of religion, which unless received in its whole extent, can neither be for your credit here nor for your welfare hereafter, than, by appearing to belong to it, that you should have it in your power to mislead its conscientious adherents. If you are not a real sheep of the fold, I do not wish you to wear the spoils of one.

I hope, however, in your own good sense and many virtues, aided by the best of education; but chiefly in the mercy of God, which, whether you are pleased or displeased, whether you are serious or smile at the news, I can assure you is fervently implored in your behalf, by many a pious and charitable catholic, that you will embrace one of the former, and not the last of the above proposals.

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I dare say, Sir, you remember, at least I do, when, perplexed with the difficulties, which your early novelties had thrown you into, you declared that you were *almost resolved to give up all your subtle metaphysics, and to confine your reading to the devout à Kempis.* O! that you had been quite resolved upon following this motion of grace! You would have found more light and wisdom in that diminutive volume, than in the fifty huge tomes of the Encyclopedie. What an accomplished ascetic and defender of orthodoxy, instead of a dangerous innovator, would the Church, in this time of her greatest need, have possessed! We should have beheld a second St. Bernard, instead of a second Abelard. If, however, instead of confining yourself wholly to such reading, you will make trial of it, according to the pious practice of your early years, during eight days only, we may still hope that a part, at least, of these brilliant prospects, will be realized; that the damages, which you have occasioned to the Church,

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will be repaired: and that yourself, in particular, becoming consistent with yourself in the essential article of religion, will begin to enjoy the full comforts of the same and of your sacred profession, in a word, that you will be as clear in character, and as happy, in your own mind, as I sincerely wish you to be:

Who am, Sir,

Your faithful humble Servant,

St. Peter's House, Winchester,

Dec. 29, 1796.

John Milner.

ADDITIONAL

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

FOR p. 7.—The writer has, since his work was committed to the press, been assured that Dr. Geddes has addressed, not a single *Carmen Seculare*, or Congratulatory Ode, to the common enemy, but three several such poems, at so many different times, on the most brilliant epochs of their Revolution: the last of which celebrates the conquest of the Low Countries. These are said, by those who have perused them, to be printed with all the embellishments, which the typographic art is capable of bestowing. On the seditious tenor of the first of these Odes, and on the heterodoxy and infidelity, which are conspicuous in the Doctor's writings in general, see *the Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1793, p. 887. Jan. 1794, p. 27. also March, p. 230. and April, p. 321.

For p. 121.—Since the above sheets were printed, the author has met with fresh proofs that the most learned and intelligent members of the Established Church see the writings of the Rev. Joseph Berington, and one or two other writers, in the same light that

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he himself with the catholic body, in general does, namely, as an utter dereliction of the fundamental and distinctive tenets of their religion, and as forming a sufficient ground of communion with those of the protestant persuasion. This is manifest by the following extract from a letter, which has just appeared in the most respectable of our periodical publications, as being honored with communications from the first characters in this kingdom. See *the Gentleman's Magazine for December 1796*, p. 994. It may be proper to premise that the *Bampton Lecture*, lately founded in the University of Oxford, is the most celebrated course of theological instruction this day in the Established Church.

“ In Mr. Gray's eighth sermon preached at the Bampton Lecture, is the following passage.—In this country, some of those who are among the most respectable descendants of its ancient advocates, have not only abjured its temporal and deposing powers, but have at length considered themselves as enfranchised from its spiritual dominion; asserting the proper and independant jurisdiction of separate dioceses, their inherent authority of appointing their own bishops, uncontrollable by and requiring not the confirmation of a distant Pontiff; the right of every church to deliver its own beliefs, traditions and maxims; and vindicating every other essential privilege compatible with such faint and indistinct reverence as they still profess to the titular pre-eminence of an ancient See. Such have also, at the
“ same

" same time, advanced towards other principles of
 " the Reformation, in contending for the general use
 " of the scriptures in the vulgar language; in confi-
 " dering them as the test and criterion of all human
 " pretensions; in discriminating between the au-
 " thority of the canonical and apochryphal books; in
 " correcting the corruptions of the vulgate; in dis-
 " allowing the existence of an unerring authority of
 " interpretation; in admitting the propriety of a pub-
 " lic service in the language of the people; in dis-
 " claiming the canons of the council of Trent, at least
 " as to discipline; in confessing that they have disco-
 " vered in their church a departure from primitive
 " simplicity, and abuses in vulgar practice; in ac-
 " knowledging the validity of the ordinations of our
 " church; and in intimating the distrust of the
 " grounds on which the celibacy of the priesthood
 " was imposed."

The writer, who quotes this long passage from *the*
Bampton Lecture, thus goes on:—"Now presuming
 " that this statement is correct, as indeed the learned
 " author refers to many names and publications in
 " support of his assertion, I shall be glad to be in-
 " formed what it is which prevents these respectable
 " persons from coming over to our church. . . . I re-
 " ally do not see what it is which withholds these per-
 " sons from our communion, &c."

(Signed)

"A Friend to the Established Church,"
 "Nov. 22."

The author of this is forced to own that *the Bampton Lecturer* has fairly stated the doctrine of certain writers, who are considered by the public to belong to the Catholic body, as is visible on the face of their respective publications. He is obliged likewise to confess that the conclusion which *A Friend to the Established Church* draws from these concessions is unavoidable, viz. that there is no just and consistent reason why those, who seriously and with sufficient knowledge of the cause, make the same, should not go over to the established church, or to any other communion, which may suit their interest or their fancy.—In case however the present sheets should ever meet the eye of either of the gentlemen above-mentioned, it may be proper to inform them; 1st, As to “the respectable” descendant of the ancient advocates of the Pope’s “spiritual supremacy,” (who indeed have suffered imprisonment, racking and death in that cause: vide *Diar. rerum gest. in Turri Lond.* ad an. 1582, Nov. 7, 17, 23. Dec. 2. item an. 1584, Jul. 10.) from whose works part of the above quotations are taken, that if this gentleman has unfortunately erred in the sciences of theology and the canon law, from never having had the opportunity of studying them, he appears at least to have acquiesced in the condemnation of his errors, pronounced by the proper judges, in their *Pastoral of Dec. 26, 1792.*

2dly, With respect to Dr. Geddes, from whose writings other sentences are culled in the above passage, it is for the friends of the established church to consider,

der, when they are acquainted with his declared opposition to establishments in general, his denial of the inspiration of the holy scripture, &c. whether they choose to admit him to their communion: most certainly the Catholics will be glad to have it generally understood that he does not belong to theirs.

Finally, in regard to the Rev. Joseph Berington, who has furnished an ample quota towards the Lecturer's triumph, and who indeed, as I have proved, has been labouring, during a course of years, to undermine the foundations of the catholic church, it remains to be seen whether he will or will not retract his erroneous, schismatical and heretical opinions. I hope in God that he will have the grace to do so: otherwise I trust in God that our watchful and zealous pastors will take the necessary means to prevent the scandal of Catholics and the triumph of Protestants being perpetuated through the means of this man.



ERRATA.

- p. 17. l. 10. after City r. of.
- p. 36. l. 14. for Belluacensio. r. Belluacensis.
- p. 43. l. 14. for mirauculous. r. miraculous.
- r. p. 76. for p. 16.
- p. 78. l. 6. for 1. r. 5.
- p. 101. r. foundation.



